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*Richard B. Colquhoun*  
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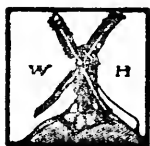
Work and Travel in Four  
Continents

By

Archibald R. Colquhoun

*Author of "The Mastery of the Pacific," etc.*

*With Frontispiece from a painting by Herman G. Herkimer  
and a facsimile letter of Cecil Rhoades*



London

William Heinemann

1908

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To My  
Fellow-Worker and Fellow-Traveller

"I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and cry 'tis all barren!' ; and so it is, and so is all the world to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers."—*Sterne*.



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## INTRODUCTION

As I am frequently asked about my family and the meaning of our peculiar name, a few words on the subject may be of interest. My earliest known ancestor was Humphrey de Kilpatrick, so called because he hailed from the district of that name in the Leven-achs, the land of the powerful family of Lennox. Humphrey received from his liege lord the Earl of Lennox, in 1190, the gift of the lands of Colchune, which were situated in the west of Kilpatrick, running down to the Clyde and including the point on which stood (and still stands in decay) an ancient fortress known as Dunglass. No place-name Colchune (or Colquhoun) still survives, but the modern town of Milton was the "middle-toun" of the Colchune country, and Chapelton commemorates the site of the Colchune Chapel, while a muir and a burn still bear the name. The reason for the disappearance of the place or district name is probably found in the fact that the head of the family, in the third generation from the first Humphrey, married the heiress of a big estate on Loch Lomond and went to live there at Luss, which became the centre of the family possessions. Cadets were planted out in the old Colchune country, but little by little it was sold, until no part of it to-day belongs to the Colquhouns. Luss, on the contrary, became the centre of an estate which was constantly increased, until at the present time it extends along nearly the whole western shore of Loch Lomond and is one of the finest in the Western Highlands.

The etymology of the name Colchune (which became Colquhoun by the mediæval Gaelic transliteration into Latin, *qu* being commonly used for *ch*) is somewhat

obscure. It is derived by some authorities from *coil cumhann* (*mh* mute) "a narrow wood," and by others from the Gaelic words for "a sea coasting corner or point," alluding to the castle of Dunglass, which was a family mansion of the Colquhouns for many generations. In any case the original form was both spelt and pronounced Colchune or Cuchuin, the *l* being mute in the first, and the pronunciation has not really altered, though on non-Scottish tongues the name sounds more like Kohoon. Americans who drop the superfluous syllables and spell the name Calhoon or Calhoun, pronouncing the *l*, make a mistake. They get neither the original spelling nor pronunciation. The form Cahoon, which I have met, is really better, being a fairly good phonetic rendering of the name.

The family deeds and records at Luss establish the position of the Colquhouns as people of some importance, especially after the marriage of Robert, in 1386, with the Fair Maid of Luss. From this time the lairds of Luss played their part in the history of Scotland, holding offices under the king, rearing large families, and continually adding, little by little, to their estates. They had enemies, such as the Macgregors, who on a celebrated occasion, mentioned (with many inaccuracies) by Sir Walter Scott in "The Lady of the Lake" and "Rob Roy," descended on them and massacred a great number of the clan. For this crime—the massacre of Glenfruin—the Macgregors were proscribed and became the "nameless clan." Over all enemies, great and small, the Colquhouns triumphed, and, though but a small clan, they held their own and helped to keep the balance between the civilised Lowlands and the wild tribes of the Western Highlands. Eventually they were absorbed into the industrial civilisation of the former, and to-day they are found scattered throughout the busy towns of the Lowlands as well as living in model villages on the estate of their chief. The city with which they have, perhaps, been most intimately connected, and

which knows them best, is Dumbarton, which is actually in the old Colchune country.

Sir Robert and the Fair Maid of Luss had many sons, the eldest of whom inherited Luss and was chief of the clan. To his younger brother Robert he gave the estate of Camstradden, on the shores of Loch Lomond, a little south of Luss. The descendants of Robert from father to son held this estate of Camstradden for fifteen generations, during a period of 435 years (1390—1825), and then it was sold to Sir James Colquhoun of Luss.

From this cadet branch of the chiefs of Colquhoun I am descended, and can trace my ancestry in the male line back for twenty-one generations to Humphrey de Kilpatrick in 1190. As the Camstradden family split off in the fourteenth century, our connection with the Colquhouns of Luss is too distant to be called relationship; moreover, their male line failed in the time of Queen Anne, and was continued through the son of the heiress of Colquhoun, who had married a Grant, taking his mother's name.

The history of such an old Scots family as mine, if there were space for it, would be an epitome of the domestic history of Scotland and not without interest. First the clan, gathered under the wing of a land-owning chief, then the lairds, each with his "mickle land, pickle debt, law-suit and a doo-cot," then the adventurer to the colonies, the prosperous burgess, the soldier, the lawyer and administrator, going forth from a poor Scots home to win fortune in distant lands. In such a story one may trace influences at work to-day and little suspected by those they govern. I, for instance, "heard the East a-calling," but did not know till I set myself to study my family history that the call came to us three or four generations back. Tricks of foreign speech and gesture, about which I have often been questioned, I now know that I owe to a Spanish ancestress unsuspected by me.

But I must dilate no longer on family history and tradition, for my father waits to be introduced, and he,

who never waited patiently for any one or any thing, would not forgive me if I kept him longer for what he would certainly call—it was a favourite expression—“a pack of balderdash!” He was as democratic in principle as he was autocratic in practice, and I am convinced that he felt not the slightest pride in a long and honourable descent. Consequently the family tradition played little part in my own upbringing, and if I include this brief account of my ancestry in this book it is because I am so often asked about it, and because we poor Scots, who have done some work for the Empire to which we belong, are proud of the country that bore us and the poverty-stricken lairds who were our forbears, and think with affection of the too-often barren acres to which our families clung with so much devotion. Scotland for ever!







## CHAPTER I

### MY FATHER GOES TO INDIA

My great-grandfather, Hugh Colquhoun, lived on a small estate called Underwood, near Stirling. He was a prosperous man and married into a good mercantile family, his wife being Elizabeth Semple. At the time when all Britain was shaking with fear of invasion from "Boney" he raised a troop of regulars for home service called, in the fashion of the day, "Fencibles." One of his grandsons afterwards carried on the tea business in Glasgow, which was the source of the family fortunes, under the name of Semple and Co. Elizabeth Semple was granddaughter to Donald Govan of Cameron and Bonhill, who is reputed to be the original of the old Admiral in "Humphrey Clinker." The Smolletts had at one time got possession of one of the Colquhoun estates, and Donald Govan's own place at Bonhill passed into their hands, so the connection between the families was undoubtedly close—more close than friendly! In fact, a feud existed between the Colquhouns and the Smolletts to such an extent that my father incurred the wrath of the head of the clan on one occasion by voting for a Mr. Smollett who was the Conservative candidate for Parliament. My father did not agree with Mr. Smollett's politics, but declared obstinately that he was the "best man," and the best man knew most about India, so he should vote for him! I suspect that he did so very largely to demonstrate his independence of clan ties or the influence of his chief, Sir James, for, although the latter was his good friend, my father would not brook any idea of the patronage or feudal feeling which is the kernel of the clan system. He aggravated his offence by inviting

Mr. Smollett to a fine dinner ordered at the local hotel, and this although he was an ardent Liberal and admirer of Gladstone, while Smollett was in the other camp. My father was not always so unorthodox in his attitude to the party to which he belonged. When the "Governor Eyre" episode happened in Jamaica, and although Eyre was a friend of his, he sided with the Liberal Government, and quarrelled over the affair with his rich aunt, Miss Bathgate. She was so incensed with him that at last she wrote, "Don't send me any more of your Radical trash; I will not read it. And don't write to me; I will return your letters." And she cut him out of her will!

These stories introduce my father in a characteristic light rather prematurely--while I have not yet done with his grandparents. It remains to be said that Donald Govan, my great-great-great-grandfather, had for his wife the Lady Helen Johnstone, sister to the then Earl of Annandale, and that on this slender foundation rested a family tradition that my father might have succeeded to the (now extinct) earldom. By a most curious coincidence, however, he married *en secondes nocces* the granddaughter of a more serious claimant, who actually spent a great deal of his money in an abortive claim on the Earldom of Annandale.

The two sons of Hugh and Elizabeth Colquhoun were named Archibald and Hugh, and the former entered the army in 1796 at the age of sixteen or seventeen, was captain in the 40th Foot from 1805 to 1813, and saw a good deal of service in South America and the Peninsula. He then (1813) joined the Pay Department and went out to India, where he was in 1817 when (with a great part of the army) he was retired on half-pay at the close of the Napoleonic wars. This custom, which seems strange to us now, was general at that period. The army was reduced to a peace footing as soon as peace was proclaimed. Men were sometimes retired on half-pay after a couple of years' service, and in the case of Colonel James

Gardner, an acquaintance of my father's, he was ensign at thirteen and placed on half-pay before he was fourteen. At nineteen he took active service, and at twenty-four was once more retired as a half-pay captain!

My grandfather was only thirty-seven when he was retired, and having a large family—originally twelve but reduced by death to six girls and a boy—to support, he went into business in Calcutta, where he died after a few years. For reasons which will appear later I have very few family papers on which to draw, but a fragment of a diary, kept by my grandfather in India, has come down to me. It is very well written and expressed, and contains marginal notes, such as “Wrote to Mrs. C.,” “Meeting with J. S.”—a *précis* of the subject matter. Very few men keep such a record nowadays! In this fragment he tells of a friendship which he struck up with an officer named Grindlay, not in his own regiment, and of a feeling of mutual liking which inspired them both from the first. One day they discovered that they were both great-grandsons of Donald Govan and Lady Helen, one of whose daughters had married a Grindlay and settled in America. The founder of the well-known banking house was the father of the man who met and fraternised with my grandfather without knowing of their kinship.

My grandfather's death must have come very hardly on his widow, who was left to face the world with no more stalwart protector than her boy, then about fourteen or fifteen. My grandmother, whose maiden name was Janet Bathgate, also belonged to a family with Indian connections, but from my father's early letters we know that she was by no means in easy circumstances. She was, however, a woman of character and determination, and very handsome and dignified to boot. She lived with her daughters in a small house in the Meadows—a suburb in Edinburgh now gone—and there the six beautiful girls became the centre of attraction for the young officers of the garrison. Five of them married into the army, one

becoming the wife of Sir John Dennis, who commanded the Buffs, another marrying Colonel Fraser, a third Colonel Grant of the Canadian Rifles, a fourth Captain Yate, and the fifth Dr. Dempster, a military surgeon. The sixth married an Edinburgh physician, Dr. Marr.

My father was brought up by his uncle Hugh at Underwood after my grandfather went to India, but in 1820 he joined his mother and attended the Edinburgh University. One can imagine the anxiety of the widow over her one boy, left fatherless at a critical point in his career, but as far as character went he gave her little trouble. He was not only extremely handsome but distinguished in appearance, notwithstanding which he was neither vain nor foppish. In after life he was, indeed, extraordinarily careless in his dress, but I think he knew by that time that dress made very little difference to him—he could afford to be careless. He had the uncompromising morality of the Scottish Puritan and an uprightness and downrightness which, if report is true, he inherited from his mother. He had, moreover, that most excellent quality common at that time in Scotland, but (as far as I can observe) becoming rarer and rarer in the sister kingdoms, a sturdy independence and a determination to fight his own battles and not be “beholden” to anyone. This spirit of independence he inculcated in after days into his children, but by a mistake in method rather than in principle he converted it into a discouragement rather than a stimulus, and by his attitude of exacting rather than influencing he defeated his own ends and stirred up rebellion. It was difficult to reconcile the subservience demanded by my father, in his parental capacity, with the growth of healthy individualism and independence among his children, but we are all able to admire the sturdiness of his own character and his freedom from any taint of hypocrisy or snobbishness. My father’s character is, naturally, interesting to me because of the influence it exercised on my own career, but also because

it was that of a vanishing type. Such Spartan discipline as he exacted, and such relations as he established with his children in early years, would be considered almost inhuman now. I think they were often deplorable in their effects. But at the present time we have certainly swung to the other extreme, and I find no more convincing sign of this than the increasing number of boys in our well-to-do middle classes who are content to be dependent on their parents until well on into manhood. Scotland, which had no provision for her sons beyond a good education, has thrown them out by scores upon a world in which they have carved their way to success. We Scotsmen owe something to our inhospitable motherland and our frugal homes. In the half-century from 1780 the Island of Skye alone sent out no fewer than 21 lieutenant and major-generals, 48 colonels, 600 commissioned officers, about 10,000 soldiers, four governors of colonies, one governor-general, one adjutant-general, one Chief Baron of England and one Judge of the Supreme Court of England! In this book the reader will see how one branch of an old Scottish family has spread itself, first to India, then to Australia, and again to America, both North and South.

With this dissertation let me get on with my father's story. Of course he wanted to be a soldier. It was the life to which from a baby he had been accustomed, for his first recollections were of the barracks at Lichfield and of going to school in charge of an orderly. At Underwood he once ran away, following a passing regiment, and was recovered only after some hours by his relatives, who found him, perfectly happy, sharing the soldiers' meal while they bivouacked by the roadside. His character suited him for soldiering, for he was bold and careless of danger, quick to come to decisions, determined in carrying them out, and, above all, was able to make himself obeyed. He was, moreover, extremely popular, although he never courted popularity, and both with men and women and in all classes he was able to win affection and esteem without

(to all appearance) giving much in return. In short, he was a man of strong character united to a handsome person and considerable charm. Such a man could not fail to make his mark and to attract others without taking much trouble to do so.

Unfortunately, there was no chance for him to follow his natural bent. The only offer that came his way was for a nomination in the medical service of the East India Company, and the prospects were so good that he could not refuse, even though he had no taste for doctoring.

The post of assistant-surgeon does not suggest much to modern ideas, but was considered at the time to be (in the words of a delectable handbook published in 1847) "desirable both on account of the immediate advantages it offers and the prospective benefits with which it is fraught." In 1825, when my father went out, the immediate advantages were even greater than they were twenty years later, and the qualifications still fewer. It was said that "in the old days" a medical officer for India "need only sleep one night on a medicine chest" in order to become perfectly qualified. I am quite unable to state whether my father prepared himself in this way, but consider it more likely that he spent as brief a period as possible at the medical college of Edinburgh. Even when he was about to leave India, in 1848, the aspirants to the East India Company's medical service, where salaries began at £200 to £300, only needed a certificate from the Royal College of Surgeons, or a diploma from the colleges of Dublin, Edinburgh or Glasgow, and a certificate of "having acquired, and being capable of practising with proper dexterity, the art of cupping." In practical experience six months at a hospital and at least two courses of lectures on physics were deemed indispensable before they could appear before the Company's examiner. If these regulations do not make the mouths of budding general practitioners

water, in these days of severe competitive exams and low fees, then I am very much mistaken! Those of us, however, who are more likely to be patients than physicians may be thankful that our lot was not cast in India in the first half of the nineteenth century, even with every prospect of being "cupped" in any emergency with "proper dexterity."

The voyage round the Cape, in 1825, occupied four to five months, and the passenger, who in the case of a single man paid to Calcutta about £100 in a side cabin and £150 in an upper or poop deck, had to furnish his own cabin and provide himself with a store of linen and other necessities to last for the entire voyage, as no washing was ever done on board. The expenses of an outfit and journey were considerable for a Scots family in those days, and I do not think my father could afford the 120 shirts which, according to contemporary authorities, were an indispensable item in the list of necessities for the voyage. My delectable handbook to India, by the way, which is for the most part taken from the compendium of information published by my father's friend J. H. Stocqueler (editor of the *Englishman* of Calcutta\* and a well-known character) contains advice to the young cadet which is too precious to be lost, especially as it reflects in an illuminating way upon the times in which my father's youth was cast.

The author (anonymous) draws a picture of the young cadet coming up to London, as my father did, and calling at the India House, now sacred chiefly to the memory of Charles Lamb, but then the focus of many ambitions, the scene of many historical meetings. Here the young cadet

\* The "Dictionary of National Biography" contains the following strange statement concerning Stocqueler: "Stocqueler did much journalistic work . . . editing some worthless satirical prints such as *The Calcutta Englishman*." This notice bears internal evidence of having been compiled by some military authority who despised civilians "as such." But not even a military authority has any excuse for not knowing that *The Calcutta Englishman* is the oldest existing Anglo-Indian newspaper, and of high standing.

is met by many busy and important clerks to whom he applies for advice and instructions. He is patronisingly received at last by one, who tells him that, as for his kit, he is of course expected to show his gratitude to the Governor who nominated him by buying everything from some firm connected with the House. Thereupon the guileless cadet is taken by the patronising clerk to the firm of which the latter is either a member or where he gets a commission, and there he buys a large number of inferior articles, including a carpet bag (indispensable), holland blouses, jean trousers, and a prodigious supply of socks and shirts.

The list, compiled by my anonymous author, is much better than the one given by Stocqueler. Twenty-four flannel waistcoats and thirty-four pairs of trousers, but only five pairs of boots and five pairs of shoes! Walking exercise was not fashionable in those days, especially in India, so this allowance was probably sufficient; but what the cadet wanted with several dozen pairs of silk and kid gloves I cannot imagine. With extraordinary temerity my author also gives a list for ladies going out to India. "In olden times," he says, "it was considered a reproach to a woman that she was going out to India. Her enterprise was regarded as an indelicate attempt to force herself upon the hapless bachelors of the East, whose pretensions she was supposed to measure by the length of their purses and the chances of their early dissolution." The art of saying things like that is now entirely lost. No one who lived or wrote later than the 'sixties could do it. I do not think that any modern man would dare to publish a list of the garments required by the husband-hunting ladies on their voyage to India. My man does it unblushingly, and here are some of the items:—

- 36 Paris cambric trousers
- 6 mosquito sleeping drawers
- 36 petticoats, but only
- 14 frocks of all sorts



4 lbs. of powder—(for hair or face ?)  
12 tooth brushes (the mere man need only take 6)  
Perfumery, pomades, etc., *ad lib.*

I do not know if any enterprising ladies were on my father's ship when he sailed for India, but I do know, from personal experience, that four months shut up at such close quarters were not likely to result in any after effects of a matrimonial character—it was too long; the really dangerous voyage lasts about ten days. In those leisurely times, however, four or five months were not considered ill-spent when passed in the manner described below, according to a contemporary publication. “For four months there has been a continual round of social intercourse, altogether divested of care” (no bridge debts in these days!). “Regular and abundant meals, opportunities of uninterrupted study, rational and instructive conversation, with such recreations as walking, music, card-playing, chess, backgammon, shark-catching, and dolphin-harpooning, have contributed to beguile the cares arising from home-sickness, sea-sickness, and the cares which affect the stranger to a ship.” It is not often, we are told, that outward-bound vessels touch at any port or even make the land during any voyage. “Sometimes, however, a stay of a day or so is made at Madeira; occasionally an unexpected deficiency of provisions or water, an injury to the ship not to be repaired at sea . . . will carry a vessel to the Cape of Good Hope. These incidents serve to break and vary the voyage agreeably.”

I linger over these details of voyaging because I was fated to make the same journey as my father, under similar circumstances—going out to seek my fortune—forty years later, and the conditions were in many ways similar. I really believe I enjoyed the voyage, though a lady who has done several journeys with me declares that the only part of the picture quoted which she recognises is the “regular and abundant meals,” which I have the reputation of being always able to enjoy on board ship. She

says, moreover, that she has tried all the incidents recommended as "pleasantly diversifying" the voyage (including deficiency of food and water, but excepting dolphin-harpooning) and she does not consider the programme sufficiently attractive to make her sigh for the good old days of the Cape route and Messrs. Wigram's or Green's "free traders," where "luxury, safety, and a delightful voyage" were combined.

As a matter of fact, my father was not destined to make his first voyage peacefully. He started out on February 18, 1825, in the ship *Palmyra* and encountered in the Bay of Biscay the gale which proved fatal to the *Kent*, East Indiaman, and led to that ship taking fire. Death by fire or drowning seemed imminent for all, when a vessel hove in sight and nearly all on board were saved, but the ill-fated *Kent* blew up. The *Palmyra* was more fortunate, but had to put back to Falmouth for repairs.

A year before his arrival a mess was established at the Calcutta Fort for the newly-come cadets, with a special officer in charge whose duty it was to find servants for the young "griffins" and generally advise and protect them. In one respect arrival in India for the young cadet must have been much the same in '25 as it was in '68. One was met by an army of dusky, white-coated, white-turbaned and obsequious people, rolling their eyes, gesticulating and chattering. *Sircars*, *baboos*, *durbashes*, *khitmatgars*, *khansamahs*, and *bearers* crowded round the stripling from England and made him feel, despite himself (and the consciousness of the very small sum to his credit at the bank) a real *sahib*.

"Master want very good servant—very best *khitmatgar*? I am a master's slave! Better you not trust that other fellow—that Balloo one very rascal—I know every ting—master's servant—fine character got!"

"Go to—blazes!"

"Certainly, master—what master says must be do—

master come militry service, or civil service? Militry, must be general soon—civil got, then soon makee judge!”

“Don’t bother—get out!”

“I think master governor’s relation—got same face, only handsomer. See my character, *sahib*!—supposee you want money, sir—I give plenty. Never mind for repay! All things I can get for master, only want your honor’s favour.”

It is worth while to bracket with this picture of the Indian servant as we first see him a little thumbnail sketch of the “griffin,” as he appears to his “humble slave.” “Yes, master,” says an old *khansamah*, “when I go to meet young gentlemen at the Sandheads (Ganges mouth) I think what beautiful manners they must have in England, for, when I bring a cup of tea it is always ‘Tankee, tankee!’ and they bow their heads. Three months later, *sahib*, no more *tankee, tankee*, but plenty *galee* (abuse) and *jehannum ko jao* (proceed to Hades)!”

The India of to-day is very different to that of 1825. There were then no hotels, and the newcomer had to depend on the kindness of friends to whom he brought letters or to take refuge in boarding-houses. In the days when ships only came in about twice a month it was possible, however, to keep open house, and the officials of the Company lived with a careless ease and lavish hospitality which landed most of them, despite good salaries and plenty of “opportunities,” in quagmires of debt. Interest was at 12 per cent., and with insurance amounted to 16 per cent. “Interest never sleeps,” says the Eastern proverb. The salaries were paid monthly and there was no taxation, so that things were made as easy as possible, while promotion was by rotation, and the only thing necessary to earn a higher salary or an eventual pension was to live long enough. The health question was, however, a very serious one, largely, I imagine, because the English had not learnt in any way to accommodate themselves to the climate. “The lolling couch, the joys of

bottled beer" were still "the luxuries they boast them here." I find Stocqueler recommending people to take exactly the same meals as in England, and the ordinary drink was then Hodgson's pale ale. There is a family legend to the effect that in the Afghan campaign, in which he took part, my father found the soldiers suffering from the lack of some stimulant, and succeeded in distilling from the native grapes a kind of brandy, which was christened "Colkie" and was very popular as well as profitable to its inventor. When I got to India we used to drink Bass or Allsopp all day long—a fact which often makes me wonder at my own constitution—but a merciful Providence preserved me from "Colkie" !

My father did not join the medical service at once—for what reason I do not know—but went to Burma, where the occupation of the coast provinces was just being accomplished. There he made the acquaintance of Judson, the American missionary, for whom he had a great admiration. Judson had made his way to Burma in 1814 and had many difficulties, for the East India Company was not favourable to missionaries. In 1824 he moved from Rangoon to Ava, where he was at first well received, but when war broke out he was imprisoned and subjected to insults and indignities, being suspected of correspondence with the English. Later he started work among the Karens, translated the Bible and produced his Burmese grammar and Pali dictionary, works long out of date but involving an immense amount of labour.

In 1827 my father was in Calcutta, and joined the General Hospital on the establishment of the East India Company, but the pay was small at this stage, expenses of living were high, and his difficulties not few, especially as he desired to send some help home to his mother. In July, 1828, he writes to his sister Isabella, wife of Colonel Fraser, who was then at Bombay: "I am at present receiving only 160 rupees a month, and spending more than double that sum." He adds a note, which is amusing in view of his

own later experiences. Speaking of a friend he says: "I certainly admire his taste in marrying a girl of sixteen in preference to an old tabby of thirty-five." These were the days when ladies retired into matronly caps and middle age at thirty and when girls were almost "on the shelf" at twenty-two or three!

Writing to the same sister, his favourite Isabella, a few months later, my father says: "I have this moment received your melancholy letter acquainting me with the death of your dear little boy. You have certainly, my dear sister, been severely tried by the hand of Providence, but while I cannot cease regretting the great loss you have sustained, I am delighted to find you have betaken yourself to the only Fountain of real consolation, one indeed which seems to chasten the human mind and converts the most poignant grief into calm resignation. In spite, however, of all that religion and philosophy can do, Nature will occasionally get the better of both, and make us look back with melancholy remembrance on the hopes once so fondly cherished, never to be realised. I am not a little surprised that you should have supposed for a single moment that the religious feelings expressed in your letter would be treated by me with scorn and contempt. You certainly pay a very poor compliment to my feelings, as well as to my judgment. I, like yourself, have learnt long ere this how ridiculous it is to found our prospects of happiness on the sandy foundation which this world affords. I assure you I have not now, and never have had, any other tie to this world but that of my friends, my mother and my sisters, and I am ready to sacrifice myself to contribute to their happiness. I believe I have already given pretty substantial proofs of what my inclinations are, and only hope I may be spared for their sakes. I am on the point of marching to Benares with the 28th, but have no expectation of getting a charge for the next three years unless I can command interest with the Commander-in-Chief. I am getting daily deeper into debt, which is quite a new

thing to me and gives me not a little uneasiness, but I am satisfied that no one can live more economically than myself, obliged, as I am, to purchase tents, horses, and all the requisites for marching on 150 rupees per month."

This letter, written at the age of twenty-two, only came into my hands recently, many years after his death, and, despite its stiff epistolary style and the obvious difficulty with which the writer expresses feelings which are almost too sacred for words, it gives me the one brief glimpse I have ever had of my father's inner nature. Evidently he had already adopted, even towards his favourite sister, that attitude of reserve in speaking of himself which characterised him so strongly in later life and constituted a barrier through which not even his nearest and dearest dared to penetrate. My aunt Isabella, happily, had another son later on and called him Archibald after her brother, and this cousin Archie was a favourite with my own sisters, perpetuating in the second generation the tender friendship of their father and mother. Archie Fraser went to Australia, married and died there, but his sons and daughters live there, and the latter have inherited the beauty and charm of their Scottish grandmother whose name one of them bears.

My father's circumstances improved as soon as he got a "charge"—that is, a regimental post—and he was able to send home sufficient money to buy a house in Carlton Street, Edinburgh, which remained his property, although it was to be his mother's residence for her life. I shall introduce my readers to this house later on.

When he was about twenty-six, having been seven years in India, he fell in love with and married an orphan girl of only sixteen. She was the daughter of a Scottish indigo planter named Anderson and a Spanish lady, Amora de Rosa, and both her parents had died at the ages of twenty-one and twenty-two, leaving two little children, Felicia and a boy. Their father left them a small fortune, about £7,000, and they were taken charge of by kind

friends and lived up country, at Mongyr, with missionaries. When Felicia was fifteen or sixteen some ladies who were travelling to Calcutta brought her there, and she learnt that her little fortune was lost through the failure of a business house in which the trustees had invested it. It was at this juncture that she met the handsome young Archibald Colquhoun, and a very pretty romance hangs over the story of the courtship of this young couple. They were married in the cathedral at Calcutta, on Christmas Day, 1833, by Bishop Heber (of "Greenland's Icy Mountains"). The young couple followed the 6th N.I. to Shahjehanpore in Oude, and on January 17th, 1835, their eldest child, my sister Agnes, was born. They were like a couple of children themselves, especially my little mother, who had had a very elementary education and had seen nothing of the world beyond her early home in the *mofussil* and one glimpse of "life" at Calcutta. She played with toys and animals long after she was married, and when the baby arrived it was just another toy! One day the young father stole it away and hid it in the long grass of the compound, and then told the servants to go and look for *missy-sahib*. The greatest consternation prevailed among the servants, who declared the child might have been bitten by a snake.

My mother inherited from her father the shrewd common-sense of her Scots ancestors and this led her to work hard to improve herself. Being intelligent she succeeded in educating herself, and became as well read and accomplished as the average girl of the period, so that my father never had cause to be ashamed of her lack of training. She wrote a most beautiful Italian hand, and learnt (after she went home to Scotland) to play on the guitar and sing—accomplishments with which she doubtless wanted to surprise her husband when he came to join her. My own recollection of her is that of sweetness and tranquillity and of a charity in her judgment not always found in our Scottish circles. Her goodness and gentleness

won the hearts of all her husband's relations and friends, and she was always served devotedly by her dependants.

The dates and places of the births of my sisters and brothers show how the family was moved about. Between '35 and '38 they were at Benares, Allahabad, and Cawnpore, and two little girls and a boy were added to the family. Then the Afghan campaign was decided on, my father was ordered to Ferozepore with the Army of the Indus, and decided that, as he could not take my mother and four babies with him, he had better send them home. Hitherto he had seen no active service, for India had enjoyed peace for twelve years, and as this point dates a fresh period in his life I will give it a fresh chapter.



## CHAPTER II

### MY FATHER GOES TO KANDAHAR AND KABUL

THE first Afghan campaign is one of those chapters in our history which we ought to read frequently to keep us humble. There were a good many complications in Indian affairs, both within and without the Company's territory among the various native States, independent or semi-independent. But Afghanistan was to all appearances well outside our sphere of operations. We could only reach it through the Punjaub or through Sind, and although Ranjit Singh, the old "lion of the Punjaub," was friendly to us he would not permit an army to march through his country, while the Sind Amirs had closed the Indus and had executed a treaty with us on the basis of keeping it closed. The ruler of Afghanistan, when Lord Auckland went to India as Governor-General in 1837, was Dost Mohammed, generally allowed to be a firm and capable ruler. He had come to the top in a series of internal conflicts, and his rival, Shah Shuja, was a fugitive living under British protection. At the same time the Sikhs, under Ranjit Singh, had wrested Peshawar from the Afghan Amirs, and it was the dearest wish of every Afghan heart to get this back.

Dost Mohammed was well disposed towards the Company and there was no open reason why Lord Auckland should not have carried out his intention, as originally stated, not to interfere in the affairs of independent States. The disturbing factor, however, was found in the advance of Russia. At an earlier period Great Britain had allowed Persia to lose province after province to Russia, and the result of Russia's establishment on the Caspian was to

make her influence with Persia predominant in a sphere which had once been considered a British preserve. Then Russia played the game which we had once tried—she egged on Persia to attack Afghanistan, and the Persian troops, largely drilled by British officers, were now used to further the designs of Russia against our Indian frontier. The siege of Herat by a Persian army, in which young Eldred Pottinger was instrumental in saving the city, gave Lord Auckland strong misgivings about the frontiers of India. Of course Herat was not on the frontier at all, but for his purpose he chose to regard it as such, nor can one find much fault with his chain of reasoning. The Punjaub was also much unsettled, Ranjit Singh getting old and asking for 50,000 muskets ("I have sent him a doctor and a dentist," wrote the Governor-General) and hankering after the jungles and treasures of Sind.

At this juncture, with unrest within and Russia pressing without, there were two courses open as regards Afghanistan. One was to back up the reigning ruler and try to keep him strong and friendly, the other was to turn him out and put our own nominee on the throne. Of course it is easy, in the perspective of history, to pronounce judgment, but I do not suppose the alternative appeared so clearly to the statesmen of the day. Even with every allowance, however, it is hard to find excuses for a policy which had for its basis the co-operation of such an uncertain quantity as the Sikhs and the capacity of Shah Shuja, who had already been three times rejected by his own countrymen. Alexander Burnes, who had won fame by his journeys to the Khanates and to Kabul in 1832, was sent on a "commercial mission" to Dost Mohammed in 1837 and was extremely well received, while a Russian mission from Orenburg under Captain Viktevisch (whom we shall meet again) was openly snubbed. The Amir was ready to do anything the British asked if only they would help to restore Peshawar, but after five months' negotiation the Governor-General wrote that the Company was

determined to support Ranjit Singh, and that Dost Mohammed had better make the best of it and must leave his foreign policy under British guidance. The Afghans not unnaturally thought the British wanted a good deal for nothing, and a brother of the Amir remarked that they "seemed to value their offers at a very high rate since they expected in return that the Afghans would desist from all intercourse with Russia, Persia and Turkestan." The Russian mission came out of obscurity, and Captain Vikteich, whose orders were of a very general character, rose to the occasion and promised the Afghans everything they could desire in the way of Russian support. The Amir made one more effort to make friends with Britain, but in vain, and Burnes retired from Kabul with many misgivings and a high opinion of Dost Mohammed.

Lord Auckland had then three courses open: to let the Afghans alone, to make an alliance with Dost Mohammed and his brothers, or to stir up Ranjit Singh and the Sikhs against him and support Shah Shuja's claims. The third was the alternative chosen, largely through the influence of Macnaghten, who was not only a pronounced Russophobe but had been converted by Captain Wade, the agent at Ludhiana where Shah Shuja lived, into a warm adherent of that exiled prince. The raising of the siege of Herat, which dragged on from November, 1837, to September, 1838, and the retirement of the Persian troops with considerable loss of life and treasure, put a stop, for the time at all events, to any fear of Russian aggression under a Persian cloak. But by this time the die was cast. Lord Auckland issued, on October 1, a manifesto setting forth his reasons for sending an army across the Indus to secure our western frontier and to succour the garrison of Herat! Shortly after this he heard that the siege of Herat was raised, but he could not give up his great scheme, which he excused by unscrupulous attacks on Dost Mohammed, representing

that Amir as making unprovoked attacks on our Sikh ally and cherishing "unreasonable pretensions" and "schemes of aggrandisement and ambition." This line of conduct was supported by a wholesale cooking of Burnes' letters from Kabul, in which everything favourable to Dost Mohammed was omitted. Lord Auckland's letters to Burnes were similarly "edited" and the whole published as a *pièce justificative* in the form of a Blue Book.

Whatever might be the rights or wrongs of the quarrel in which the British had now engaged, it is certain that, after twelve years' peace, all the military element in India were greatly pleased at the prospect of fighting again. There had been no intention, originally, of employing white troops, but it had become apparent that without them our interference in Afghanistan might come to an undignified end. The idea that Shah Shuja should regain his throne by means of troops recruited in British India, and by the aid of Ranjit Singh and his Sikhs, was one of those well-laid plans of which the proverb speaks. The old "lion of the Punjab" had sunk into a dissolute old age, and his Sikhs, according to their commander, Avatabile, had attacks of colic at the mere thought of the Khyber Pass. The Army of the Indus, therefore, which was gathered together at Ferozepore for the purpose of expelling Dost Mohammed from Kabul, was heterogeneously composed of a portion of the Bengal army (both native and British troops) and of a specially created army known as Shah Shuja's Force, which consisted of natives recruited from all parts, officered by English and paid for by the Company. Surgeon Archibald Colquhoun went up to Ferozepore with Nott's favourite regiment, the 43rd Bengal N.I., which he had commanded, being one of the twelve picked Sepoy regiments. The Bengal contingent numbered 9,500 and Shah Shuja's force 6,000.

At Ferozepore there was a great *tomasha*. Governor-General Auckland came up to meet Ranjit Singh, and on

November 29 the two rode forth on elephants amid the clash of martial music, each being followed by a train of officials and privileged friends. The sister of the Governor-General, Miss Eden, has left a lively description of the *darbar* that followed, and of Ranjit Singh, "exactly like an old mouse with grey whiskers and one eye!" My father often told us of this old warrior and of the alarm of his followers at this *darbar*, when the British officers, with a lack of manners too usual in India at that day, nearly crushed him to death in their attempts to push into the tent and have a stare at him. Later on, at the banquet which he gave, the old man got royally drunk on fiery spirits, and altogether the *darbar* of Ferozepore does not seem to have been an edifying spectacle, though quite worthy of the campaign which it inaugurated.

The campaign began inauspiciously with the resignation of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Harry Fane, who was not prepared to undertake operations with the reduced force placed at his command. His place was taken by Sir John Keane, of the Bombay army, who came to join the Army of the Indus by water in advance of the Bombay contingent, which went up through Sind. This march through Sind contravened the treaty of 1832, which expressly forbade using the Indus for military purposes, and the ferment set up among the Amirs was only ended in 1843 with the annexation of Sind, which Napier—after a famous despatch ("Peccavi"—I have *Sind*) which was perhaps meant more literally than is usually supposed—called "a useful piece of rascality."

The Army of the Indus was divided into two. It was originally intended that the main body should march through the Punjaub, but our "ally," Ranjit Singh, would not permit this, so the army had to follow two sides of a triangle, down the left bank of the Sutlej and Indus as far as Rohri, where it crossed and struck up north-east to Quetta, through the Bolan Pass, and so on to Kandahar. This looks very easy on paper, but it involved marching

more than 1,000 miles, often through burning plains, and this "military promenade," as the authorities were pleased to call it, was only accomplished with great suffering, not only on the part of the army itself but of the people through whose countries it passed. At this period our troops in India had no special field uniform. They marched and fought in red, with busbies, or the headgear which would only be seen on parade nowadays. The Sepoys, although more suitably clad, were much cumbered with a heavy kit. The difficulties increased after the crossing of the Indus and were specially severe in the sixty miles of rugged mountain barrier which divides the plains of Sind from the highlands of Beluchistan, where they were continually harassed by Beluchi marauders. Having left Ferozepore on December 10, 1838, they reached Quetta only next April. Here the command of the army was taken over by Keane, who found that the march which had brought his force within striking distance of the enemy had cost 20,000 camels, many horses and bullocks, piles of baggage, hundreds of camp-followers, and not a few men struck down by the way. The commissariat department was always in difficulties: supplies were exceedingly scarce in the country, although fruit trees were blossoming and all looked gay, and the wretched soldiers were shivering at a height far greater than most of them were accustomed to, on half rations and with scanty allowance of blankets. The work of a surgeon with such a force, at a time when field hospitals were still unknown and medical appliances were of the scantiest even in ordinary camp life, was by no means a sinecure. Each regiment had some rough provision of its own, and with this the surgeons had to make shift both on the march and in action. There were no bearer corps, trained assistants, and hospital orderlies—in short, none of the Red Cross paraphernalia, which, indeed, was not found even in the American Civil War. My father was naturally a man of fine physique, but in this campaign he

contracted rheumatism and other complaints which permanently affected him. There is a story of him, relating to this period, which gives some idea of the man, as well as of the conditions under which he had to work. He was amputating—something—and found the light difficult, so taking a tallow candle gave it to the patient to hold. The patient wobbled it, whereupon the doctor, with objurgations, adjured him to “hold the d—d thing straight or be d—d!” The candle was held straight.

There was no alternative for Keane but to go forward at once, even with his hungry, ill-equipped force, so he pushed over the Khojak Pass to Kandahar, leaving General Nott behind at Quetta with the 43rd. Nott was deeply wounded at being left behind and at being superseded, and he spoke his mind with such freedom to Keane that the latter said: “I will never forget your conduct as long as I live.” The advancing column began that awful march over the Khojak Pass which ended on April 26 before Kandahar. There had been no reconnaissance of the ground from Quetta, and though the engineers roughly made or mended some kind of road, the guns and waggons had actually to be dragged and pushed up the slopes by European soldiers—the Sepoys were too much worn out—through gorges where two loaded camels could not pass abreast. I often think this passage would be good material for the pen of Rudyard Kipling, and, despite the sufferings endured, it has a fine end, for, although the poor horses and camels died like flies of exhaustion, the little force pushed safely through and finally encamped before Kandahar in a state of great hunger, thirst, and fatigue.

Shah Shuja, who accompanied them, made a grand entry into Kandahar, from which Dost Mohammed’s brothers fled without striking a blow. A great military reception was arranged for him by his enthusiastic supporter Macnaghten, who set apart a large space for “populace restrained by the Shah’s troops.” As only about a hundred Afghans in all came out to stare at the man who

had been represented by the Indian Government as "the popular idol," there was rather a hollow ring about the whole affair and a very hollow space in the centre of the restraining troops.

My father was left behind in Quetta with the 43rd N.I., and shared the troubles and privations which befell General Nott and his forces. Nott was, of course, in the Company's service, and the clash of opinions and interests between the Queen's officers and the Company's did not improve a situation which was trying enough already.

If the "cupboard was bare" when the Army of the Indus reached Quetta, it did not get any fuller as months went on. The army had started on the "military promenade" with quantities of impedimenta of all kinds—one regiment had two camel loads of Manilla cigars—but they reached Quetta without the bare necessities of life, and, as local supplies were very scanty and did not include the ordinary articles of European use, the condition of the troops was really pitiable. Forage was so scarce that the camels had to be sent out to graze twelve miles distant. There was no material to make huts for the men, no firewood, no medicines, no wine, beer or spirits, and, lastly, the ammunition was giving out. It was under these circumstances that my father distilled the celebrated "Colkie," which was eagerly received by the soldiers, and in other ways his courage and devotion were of the greatest service to his superior officers. The position of a surgeon who could not command the simplest drugs or lotions to help him in his work among men who were weakened with privation and dysentery was by no means a sinecure.

General Nott, whose pride and care for his men was paternal, suffered with them, and to add to his chagrin at being "left to rot" at Quetta while other brigades went on to Kabul, he was now superseded in the command by Major-General Willshire, a Queen's officer who was not even his senior. Nott would have resigned had he not



been a poor man with a family to support—at least, so he says in his letters to his children. At last, having submitted with an ill grace to put himself nominally under the orders of a “Fane officer,” he left Quetta five days before Major-General Willshire reached it, and went on to Kandahar, accompanied by his favourite regiment and its surgeon, Colquhoun, reaching Kandahar on November 13, 1839. All the officers of the garrison went out two miles to meet him, a mark of respect which he attributed to their sympathy with him.

At Kandahar the commissariat was replenished by a lavish expenditure of money, and during the winter which followed Nott and his officers were busy improving the fortifications and taking stock of the forces at their disposal, many of the regiments being pronounced inefficient from sickness, and one irregular cavalry regiment being absolutely condemned, as it had not enough horses and was besides in other ways unserviceable. Captain Anderson’s troop of horse artillery came in for strong commendation, and when, on the breaking up of the winter snows, the chiefs of the Ghilzie country assembled a considerable force to cut off Kabul from Kandahar, Nott sent Captain Anderson in command of a little mixed force to oppose them. Surgeon Colquhoun was attached to this expedition, for he was always chosen for active service, being in practically every engagement in which detachments of Nott’s force took part. It transpired later in Kandahar that the Ghilzie chiefs had hoped to tempt Nott himself and all his troops out to crush them, and the intriguers in the city were prepared to rise and slay every European left within it. In this, however, they did not succeed, for Nott had complete confidence in his small expeditionary force. The battle of Tazee (my father’s first pitched battle) which took place on May 16, 1840, was a small but desperate engagement; Nott afterwards declared that it was the one occasion on which the Afghans fought really well. They charged

literally on to the bayonets, 200 tribesmen being killed. Captain Anderson and his officers received high praise for their conduct, and Nott was justified in the position which he had taken up that the Ghilzie rebellion was not so serious as the political officers made out, and did not call for him to march all his troops out from Kandahar. The Afghans were equally surprised, for they had been beaten by a detachment of Shah Shuja's force, which they had been told was composed of low-caste Hindoos with few officers.

Nott was by no means antipathetic to the people of Kandahar, and had a good opinion of Afghans generally, which my father shared. The sturdy, independent character of the people was a contrast to the cringing Bengalis, and had it not been for the excesses committed by the followers of Prince Timour (Shah Shuja's son) the British might have established amicable relations in Kandahar. As it was, they suffered from the bad conduct of the people with whom they were associated, and Nott got into hot water with the Indian authorities for punishing Timour's followers for their ill-behaviour.

Eventually the much harassed General was compelled by his orders from Kabul to take the field himself against the Ghilzies, and while he was away from Kandahar the communications with the Indus *via* the Bolan Pass and Quetta were threatened. Very soon the whole country was in a state of rebellion, and the only improvement in the situation was the arrival of Major Rawlinson at Kandahar (July, 1840) to supersede a less efficient political officer. Rawlinson was a great acquisition. A good Persian scholar (Pushto, the language of the Afghans, is written in Persian script) he had a profound insight into Oriental character and was a man of infinite tact. Half the troubles in Afghanistan were caused by the friction and differences of opinion between "politicals" and military, but Rawlinson and Nott liked each other at once and in all the trying days that followed were never at loggerheads.

They began immediately to fortify and provision Kandahar, and Nott himself went down to reinforce Quetta, leaving the political officer in charge at Kandahar. Rawlinson was one of the few heroes of this time—my father's contemporaries—who survived to my own day, and I shall have more to say of him. During the spring my father was detailed to accompany and escort parties of sick and wounded over the Bolan Pass on their way back to India—difficult and dangerous work. On one occasion he was marching between two comrades, one of whom was an Irishman, a great friend of his. The country was bare of vegetation for the most part, but here and there was a clump of the *peepul* tree, whose dry leaves rustling in the wind made a sound like voices whispering. As they approached one of these clumps the Irishman put up a hand. "Listen, Colkie," he said with a laugh, "*Vox populi vox Dei*." The words were his last. An Afghan bullet came singing through the leaves and he fell dead, shot through the heart.

By November 18 the General himself was back in Kandahar, having left garrisons at Khelat, Moostung and Quetta. It is very interesting to read his tributes to his Bengal regiments, and, although partiality was natural in a man whose life had been spent among sepoys, yet it is astonishing to find how well they bore extremes of cold, privation, and such heavy physical labour as is involved by dragging a battering train 300 miles over mountainous and rocky country and through beds of rivers and deep ravines. As for the 43rd regiment, both Nott and Rawlinson held it as their strongest and best support. "I shall be most thankful when you re-enter this town with the 43rd," writes Rawlinson, . . . "the entrance of the 43rd into Kandahar and the rumour which will immediately spread abroad of our reinforcement will have the effect of settling the two disturbed districts."

The winter of 1840—41 was, as usual at this season in Afghanistan, a fairly close time. The retirement of

Willoughby Cotton from the Kabul command left open a post which many people thought Nott should have had. Had this been the case, what a different turn affairs might have taken! No one can read Nott's letters written in 1839 and 1840 without seeing that he had quite realised a situation which only became apparent to Macnaghten and Lord Auckland when it was too late. He condemned the policy—largely due to the “politicals”—of spreading small detached garrisons about the country. One of these was sent up to Bamecan and made mischief there, and it was even proposed to send one to Balkh! In a country like Afghanistan, in view of the impossibility of keeping open communications between such scattered posts, the attempt to establish them meant, in fact, the giving of fresh hostages to fortune. Nott would have concentrated on Kabul and Kandahar until such time as the Afghan dynastic troubles had settled themselves. Elphinstone—an elderly Guardsman who was quite incapable of dealing with the situation—was, however, chosen to command at Kabul.

In March my father went out from Kandahar with a little brigade commanded by Captain J. Woodburn, a portion of which was told off to garrison the fort of Girishk, on the road from Kandahar to Herat, two miles from the right bank of the river Helmund. The position of this little garrison became by no means secure, but on account of the impression such action would have upon the natives Nott did not wish to withdraw it. Accordingly Captain Woodburn, who had returned to Kandahar, went out again to reinforce the post with a small mixed force to which my father was attached. He had some difficulty about crossing the Helmund, and was compelled to camp just opposite the position taken up by the enemy with a view to opposing his passage. On July 3 the Ghilzies, having crossed the river, moved down on him, and a battle (called Helmund) took place, which at one time might have had a disastrous end, for the Ghilzies rushed

in upon the two regiments of irregular horse on the flank, and forcing them back among the baggage got in the rear of the infantry and guns. The *Janbaz* (Afghan cavalry regiments in the service of Shah Shuja) despite the efforts of their officers, got into confusion, and affairs were critical when Captain Woodburn, with the grenadier company of the 5th regt. N.I., succeeded in moving back one of the guns and training it on the assaulting force. Three rounds of grape and volleys of musketry destroyed the nerve of the wild tribesmen, and they turned and fled. After repulsing a few minor attacks, Woodburn led his little force safely to Girishk.

It gives some idea of the odds against which he and other young officers of similar standing had to contend to read that the enemy's force in the battle of the Helmund consisted of six divisions of 1,000 each, with a *mollah* at the head of each and standards bearing the inscription : "We have been trusting in God, may He guide and guard us!" The British opposing troops consisted of five detachments of infantry and two horse artillery guns, to which the Afghan prince Timour (son of Shah Shuja) added the two cavalry regiments (*Janbaz*) which, as we have seen, nearly wrecked the whole and were condemned by Woodburn as worse than useless. My father had extraordinary luck in not being wounded in this action, in which he necessarily exposed himself in the exercise of his duty, and in doing a good deal actually outside that duty. In his official despatch from camp Girishk, July 5, 1841, Captain Woodburn says : "From Mr. Surgeon Colquhoun I also derived much assistance during the action in a variety of ways, and his ability and zeal could not have been exceeded."

In the following month (August 17, 1841) he was again in action, this time in the battle known as Secunderabad, in which Captain Griffin with a small body of cavalry attacked a force of Ghilzies and drove them from their enclosures. The native cavalry here regained their lost

reputation, but they were eclipsed by the Bengal sepoys, who were declared by Nott to be equal to three times their number of Afghans. Captain Griffin mentions in his despatch from camp Khaiwand that the medical staff, Surgeons Colquhoun and Rae, "have entitled themselves to the highest commendation." Notwithstanding all these successes, the tide of rebellion continued to rise, and the gallant Woodburn was cut off and killed in the autumn of 1841. For this reason we possess no letter from him regarding my father's services with his commands; but from his second in command, A. H. Ross, we have a most interesting memorandum, dated from Lahore, September 21, 1846, giving a list of the principal engagements in which my father was present. He adds: "The late Captain Woodburn entertained a very high opinion of Surgeon Colquhoun's ability and zeal, and noticed him most favourably."

While General Nott was occupied in subduing the districts round Kandahar the storm was gathering to burst on Kabul. As early as September 7, 1841, Rawlinson writes to Nott of a big conspiracy in favour of Dost Mohammed and says he is suffering from "an indefinite sort of apprehension that something untoward has occurred at the capital." At Kabul Macnaghten was living in a fool's paradise and Nott and Rawlinson were called alarmists. Eldred Pottinger in Kohistan vainly sent in other warnings. All three were treated as "croakers."

It will be remembered that Keane, after two months at Kandahar, had started for Kabul in June, 1839, and on his way there he took Ghuznee (July 23) by a "gambler's throw"—a daring but risky assault, the success of which temporarily so disheartened the Afghans that Dost Mohammed fled and Kabul was entered without opposition. On August 7 Shah Shuja made another of his triumphal entries—into his capital this time—which, despite the military pageant arranged by Macnaghten,

resembled a funeral procession rather than a triumph. Wade brought the remainder of the Army of the Indus through the Khyber, despite the stomach-ache with which the Sikhs greeted the idea of that dreaded Pass, and all went well on the surface. All sorts of mistakes were made, however, chiefly because of Macnaghten's blind belief in his *protégé*, Shah Shuja. To avoid derogating from his dignity the British force was not encamped in the city itself but in cantonments just outside, on a swampy plain overlooked by hills and forts, and the commissariat fort was some way off. Macnaghten spent money right and left and secured lip-service in consequence. Kabul was declared to be as safe as an Indian station, and British officers sent for their wives and children. Dost Mohammed surrendered in November, 1840, and the authorities at home and in Calcutta began to hint that it was time to retrench and withdraw, since the Afghan problem was now, on Macnaghten's own showing, so happily settled. Accordingly General Sale was sent off towards India (leaving his wife and daughter behind at Kabul with the husband of the latter—afterwards killed) and Macnaghten congratulated himself and everyone else that the troubles were over. He gently rallied Rawlinson on "occasionally yielding to despondency." He himself received a high appointment in India, and was on the point of departing to assume his new duties.

On the evening of November 1, 1841, Alexander Burnes, who was to take over Macnaghten's duties in Kabul, was congratulating the envoy on the satisfactory state of affairs. A little cloud, it is true, had appeared on the horizon. Macnaghten had just heard that Sale's brigade had been attacked and several officers and men killed and wounded. He did not, however, take this too seriously. On November 2 the storm burst. Burnes, his brother, and Lieutenant Broadfoot, who lived in the city, were the first victims. They were warned and sent for help to the cantonments, but their request was

neglected till too late. Trusting themselves to a Kashmiri they tried to escape from the house in disguise, but he betrayed them at once and they were cut down. No adequate attempt was made to stamp out this insurrection, and armed Afghans poured into the city. The officers in charge of the commissariat fort, after holding out as long as they could, cut their way through to the camp. Elphinstone was pulled this way and that by divided councils, and the greatest disorganisation prevailed. Macnaghten, a brave man with all his faults, did what he could, but his determined underestimation of the danger was the ruin of his companions. Sale was recalled, but marched on to Jellalabad—acting on his own responsibility in disobeying orders. His judgment seems to have been at fault, since Major Griffiths, with the 37th N.I. and three guns, who had been left at Gandamak, made his way thence to Kabul with no loss even of baggage. Nott was ordered to send help and recalled the brigade which he had—sorely against the grain—just despatched under Maclaren for India. The 43rd was with this brigade, and my father went with his old regiment. When they were recalled to Kandahar, and sent out again towards Kabul, Nott addressed them and told them it was not his doing. He added significantly, “I am sending you all to destruction.”

My father, who had good means of judging, always defended Nott in his action, which was certainly not in accordance with his own ideas of military discipline. Maclaren started out, but was not slow to take advantage of a fall of snow to declare the road impracticable. My father believed that the wish was father to the thought and that, if Nott had told them to go through, they would have gone at all hazards. In that case I should not have been here, for there is little chance that Maclaren's brigade could have turned the tide then setting so strongly against the adherents of Shah Shuja. By the time they could have arrived at Kabul, worn out with the winter



march and fighting, they would have been fit for little and would have simply added to the list of victims. One cannot question that Nott was glad to have Maclaren's brigade and his "darling 43rd" back, nor can we blame him for feeling that it was better to concentrate on Kandahar and keep his men in good condition rather than weaken his force by sending a much-needed column over the rocky, snow-laden passes where they would inevitably fall an easy prey to the Afghans. Neither Nott nor Sale could possibly realise the condition of helplessness to which the force at Kabul were reduced by the strategic mistakes and follies of their leaders. The only reinforcements to reach Kabul, therefore, were Major Griffiths and Eldred Pottinger, with his companion Haughton and one Gurkha out of several hundreds who escaped from Kohistan. Eldred Pottinger, however, was worth a great deal.

I may as well recount the rest of the Kabul disaster here, though few Englishmen need to be reminded of it. On December 23 Macnaghten was murdered while conducting a conference with Akbar Khan, one of Dost Mohammed's sons. Pottinger, who took up his work as chief political officer, besought his companions not to trust the Afghans but to cut their way through to Jellalabad or to seize the Bala Hissar (the citadel) and hold out there. The situation was complicated by the presence of the women and children, who would have had to be left under the protection of Shah Shuja. But as a matter of fact in the long run they were, *nolens volens*, handed over to the Afghans, so that their safety was by no means assured by the treaty which was eventually signed. By this treaty the British surrendered guns, spare arms and ammunition, and all coin in the treasury, left hostages, and were then allowed to creep out of Kabul. During their retreat all the women and children and many officers had to be surrendered, and these, numbering 180 in all, with Pottinger, Mackenzie and Lawrence as hostages, were left behind in Akbar's hands. The rest struggled

through a terribly inhospitable country in stark winter, constantly attacked, harassed and cut off. Of the 16,000 (including camp followers) only one European reached Jellalabad out of an army which, Durand declares, was strong enough in the hands of a Nott or a Napier to have swept the country. Months later a few frost-bitten sepoy straggled into Peshawar, but Dr. Brydon was the only European survivor.

Brydon, riding half insensible into Jellalabad, is a well-known picture in history. It is awful to think of the feelings of General Sale's garrison when they heard the fate of the comrades and brothers they had left only a few months before. The General himself had to hear the news that his wife and daughter (now a widow) were prisoners with the Afghans. Sale had held out in Jellalabad, despite orders to evacuate, and with the aid of George Broadfoot and his native sappers had put that place into a good defensive condition. Broadfoot's tenacity of purpose probably saved the garrison from a fate like that of the Kabul force. The council of war was in favour of making terms with the Afghans and retiring. Broadfoot was the only dissentient (Havelock, who agreed with him, had no vote on the council) but he sat his ground like a Devonshire jurymen. The letter to the Afghans actually went off, but before the answer was received the other members of the council had misgivings and finally receded to George Broadfoot's position of "Here we are, and here we stay." The Jellalabad garrison did stay—till April, 1842, when they were strong enough to raise the siege of that city, march out, and defeat the enemy in open battle, and then join hands with Pollock, who had come over the Khyber to relieve them.

But this did not happen till April, 1842, and we left my father at Kandahar in the winter of 1841. By the end of that year Kandahar was practically cut off from Kabul and India. Supplies were scanty, and Rawlinson was loth to use the powers he possessed to compel the villagers

to bring them in, because he still hoped to balance himself with the favour of some of the chiefs, whom he had so successfully divided hitherto. An additional complication was the growing disaffection among the *Janbaz*, the Afghan cavalry corps of Shah Shuja's raising, our friends of the battle of Tazee, who were now intriguing with the supporters of Dost Mohammed. Rawlinson wanted to send them to Girishk, where they would be out of mischief. On the eve of departure they mutinied, cut down their officers, and fled. Nott sent out in pursuit a body of horse, which overtook and engaged them, killing their leaders. Soon afterwards it became necessary to send an expedition of some importance against Prince Suftar Jung, a younger son of Shah Shuja, who had raised a little rebellion on his own account. Both Nott and Rawlinson went out, and Surgeon Colquhoun was as usual with the expedition, which was successful in dispersing the enemy at Arghandab. On this occasion Rawlinson had ordered all the inhabitants of Kandahar to stay within doors under penalty of death, and this measure proved successful in preventing a rising during his absence. But, as my father was wont to say, it was ticklish work living in the midst of a city whose population of some 80,000 was disaffected, to say the least of it, and might rise at any moment. In this nerve-wearing situation the British officers, and "the fighting doctor" among them, took advantage of a lull in the enemy's operations, and inaugurated games and sports to keep up the spirits of the men. They rode steeplechases, played rackets, and snowballed each other. Only a few miles off, the Doorani chiefs were encamped, to get through the winter with Oriental passivity and patience. They must have watched with wonder the gambols of their adversaries, the "mad English," but under Nott's *régime* the troops made light of the winter which so demoralised the army at Kabul.

Rawlinson had one extraordinary escape from assassination of which my father told us. A *ghazee* had been

elected by his tribe, and had vowed to kill the British Resident, as Rawlinson was called, before he tasted food or drink. Accordingly he made his way into Kandahar and waited outside the courthouse, where Rawlinson usually sat till sunset, waiting for him to come out and mount his horse for a ride. The horse was there, but it so happened that for three days Rawlinson was detained by business till too late and went without his ride. On the third day the man, mad with thirst, could bear it no longer and murdered another European, on the principle that anyone was better than no one. When caught, he made full confession, and my father described the gruesome details of how he was blown from the mouth of a gun as a warning to assassins.

The news from Kabul was scanty, but Nott heard of Macnaghten's death on January 30, 1842, and three weeks later he got a letter, two months old, signed by Elphinstone and Pottinger, ordering him to evacuate—an order which he could not have executed, even had he desired to do so.

The Doorani chiefs tried to persuade Rawlinson that Shah Shuja had joined in the revolt against his British allies. but he was not to be caught with chaff. It now became necessary, however, to weed out the Afghan population of the city, and accordingly about a thousand families were expelled, with as little harshness as possible, but still it was a distressing sight. Then Nott took the field (March 7) and, having blocked up all the gates save one, marched out against the enemy, who kept on retiring before him for three days. This was the manœuvre the chiefs had long been anxious to execute. They doubled back on Kandahar, and on the morning of March 10 began an assault on the city by setting fire to one of the gates. My father used to tell us children about this incident, for, with his usual luck in seeing fighting, he had been left behind in Kandahar on this occasion. A countryman with a donkey-load tried to get through the Herat

gate just after dusk, and, while the guard was refusing to let him pass, he succeeded in dropping a load of brushwood, saying he would return next morning. Later on some man stole up and saturated the brushwood with oil and ghee, which, when lit, at once blazed up and set fire to the gate. A fierce attack followed by the light of the blazing wood, and the *ghasees* tried again and again to rush the breach, but were repulsed with heavy loss by the steadiness and pluck of the little garrison under Major Lane. Needless to say, every able-bodied European took a hand in the defence, for the bulk of the troops were out with Nott and had any one of the entrances to the city been forced the game was up.

Even this successful repulse of the enemy did not relieve the tension at Kandahar, where the treasury was now empty—ammunition, medicine, everything indeed running short. A first attempt to send reinforcements from Quetta was defeated, but by sending out troops to meet them a relieving force got through in April. Soon after came the news that Pollock had reached Jellalabad. The worst was now over. Little skirmishes went on all round Kandahar, and my father seems from this period to have been attached to the 1st cavalry of Shah Shuja's force, commanded by Major J. Christie. We have in our possession a letter from this officer, dated January 16, 1847, and written from Bareilly, in which he enumerates some of the actions in which my father was present, commencing in March, 1842, and says: "During the whole time Mr. Colquhoun was in medical charge he gave the greatest satisfaction, and as a *soldier* he is second to none." Major Christie was a close friend of my father's and a great favourite with his men. He told a wonderful story of the devotion of one of his *rassaldars* (native officers) on an occasion when Christie's Horse had received a check and was in retreat before the Afghans. Christie himself fell with his horse into a *nullah*, and being unable to extricate the animal started off on foot. The *rassaldar*,

seeing his plight, rode up and implored him to take his horse. Christie refused again and again, but the man persisted, saying, "I am a Mussulman and have a better chance." He would not even mount behind the major, and declined to move until the latter rode off, when he cut down two out of three assailants and finally escaped on foot. This man had already been recommended for the Order of Merit, so that there was no reward within Christie's power to get for him.

Nott was now raging with impatience to go to Kabul. His troops were in fine condition and champing the bit at their forced inactivity, but counsels of prudence prevailed at Calcutta. On March 12 Ellenborough had succeeded Auckland as Governor-General, and at once issued pompous despatches as to the policy he intended to pursue. If pompous he was prudent, and Pollock, then waiting at Peshawar for leave to attempt the Khyber, was not encouraged to proceed. As a matter of fact he was not then in a position to do so—"no heart," he reports, among the sepoy, nor could they be screwed up without more white faces. Eventually, by the efforts of Henry Lawrence (whose brother George was a prisoner with the Afghans) the Sikhs were converted into genuine and not doubtful allies, and Pollock, as we have seen, crossed the Khyber and met Sale outside Jellalabad.

Nott thought Pollock should have gone straight to Kabul, but both generals were tied by orders from headquarters. Nott "began to be ashamed to look an Afghan in the face." All his officers were asking when they would be allowed to march on Kabul to wipe out the stain and rescue the prisoners. On May 18 a thunderbolt descended on them. A letter from Ellenborough said: "You will evacuate the city of Kandahar . . . you will proceed to take up a position at Quetta until the season may enable you to retire." These orders were at first kept secret between Nott and Rawlinson. Transport difficulties were really sufficient to delay carrying them

out, but one can imagine that the spirit was far from willing. On May 29 my father saw another bit of fighting at Baba Wullec, Nott and Rawlinson being both in the field, the latter in command of a body of Persian and Afghan horse, while my father was attached to Christie's Horse. The defeat of the enemy, and the consequent depression of all neighbouring chiefs, would have led to an entire dispersal had it not leaked out that the British troops were about to withdraw.

Nott had just about got to the end of his excuses for delay when, on July 22, he received another despatch from the Governor-General. Stocqueler, who had it from an eye-witness, gives a most graphic description of Nott's reception of this historic document. A *coissid* arrives with a wallet which on being opened reveals a package from the Governor-General. Nott opens it with reluctance—he expects nothing but a reiteration of previous orders. He reads on with quickening interest, his eye brightens, and at last he can hardly contain his excitement. The despatch, briefly given, amounts to this: “You are now in a position to move, and my order to retire holds good, but”—the saving but!—“you may choose the line of your retreat, either *viâ* Sind or—*viâ* Ghuznee and Kabul!” It is easy to defend Ellenborough from the criticism that he did not wish to shoulder any responsibility, since it was obviously the right course to give Nott a free hand; but it is hard to excuse the smallness of attempting to cover the inconsistency in his orders by using the word “retreat” in connection with a march on Kabul. Pollock was to co-operate with Nott and started at once for Kabul.

Nott was obliged to delay his departure in order to give a certain amount of time for the column he was sending back to Quetta to get out of danger; but on August 10, he with 8,000 troops of all arms, marched out of Kandahar in excellent order. “I and my beautiful troops are in the highest spirits,” he wrote. My father was attached to Christie's Horse, which was in the van in the skirmishes

which took place *en route*. Nott had orders from Lord Ellenborough to bring away from Ghuznee the reputed sandalwood gates of Somnath, carried away from that Indian shrine by Sultan Mahmoud eight hundred years before. Nothing in the whole campaign interested the Governor-General more than this piece of poetic justice, for he expected to make a sensation throughout India by restoring the precious gates. As a matter of fact, it was quite clear to such an antiquarian as Rawlinson that the gates were not genuine, and they were certainly not sandalwood; but they had to be "lifted" from the shrine and dragged along with the greatest care to grace the triumph which Ellenborough was already designing. Three times *en route* they were nearly captured by the enemy. All India laughed itself hoarse over the proceeding, especially as the Governor-General saw fit to announce the recovery of these "historic" relics in a pompous despatch to—of all men in the world—the Duke of Wellington! As for the effect on the natives of India, they chiefly consisted of people who had never heard of Somnath or its gates, and others who resented the desecration of a Mussulman shrine.

After a good deal of fighting, Nott and his forces arrived and camped within five miles of Kabul on August 17, Pollock having planted the British flag on the Bala Hissar on the previous day. Nott is usually credited with deep chagrin at being beaten in the race for Kabul, and his officers and men were certainly disappointed; but they had had an arduous march, and there were many sick and wounded among them. Pollock had already sent off Captain Shakespeare to rescue the prisoners with a troop of *Kuzzilbashes* or Red-heads, a distinct Persian community of the Shia faith (the Afghans are Sunnis) occupying a special quarter in Kabul. They were the remnants of Nadir Shah's Persian rearguard, left in Kabul. Pollock asked Nott to support this force by sending out a detachment, but the latter remonstrated against the order. Not only



was it contrary to his principles to expose his men in weak detachments, but he did not think them fit to start off at once on a fresh march. Luckily the prisoners were in no danger, having succeeded—largely through the diplomacy of Eldred Pottinger—in bribing their guardians. Pottinger contrived to send a message to Nott and Pollock, without revealing too much to the Afghans, by writing in Greek characters. It is rather pathetic to find the prisoners saying that, in the event of the Government repudiating the bribe they had promised, they would raise it among themselves! Sale took a detachment out to meet them and encountered them riding quietly in to Kabul escorted by Shakespeare. His brave wife—"the soldier's wife"—was among them, and brought with her the diary, kept throughout her adventures, which gives us such a vivid picture. My father witnessed their entry and the meetings between husbands and wives, brothers, and comrades-in-arms—an affecting sight. Many sad tales had to be told amid the general rejoicing. General Elphinstone, among the original prisoners, had died at Tezzen in April, 1842. Lady Macnaghten, who was one of the survivors, afterwards married Lord Headfort. She was well known in Corfu society in after years as the "Indian Begum" and was covered with relics of her early days in the shape of Indian fabrics and diamonds. Edward Lear writes from Corfu, "Milady is not to be perceived clearly along of Indian shawls and diamonds, of which jewels and her concealment of them during a flight . . . wonderful tales are about."

My father also met at Kabul a cousin of his, Tom Thomson, a man some ten years his junior who, like him, had joined the medical service of the Company. On arrival at Calcutta he was made curator of the museum on account of his scientific attainments, but within a year he was despatched to Afghanistan with a batch of recruits. At Ghuznee he was taken prisoner, and was on the point of being sold as a slave and sent to Bokhara when he

managed to bribe his guard and escape to the relieving army. Later in life he was one of the commissioners for the boundary between Kashmir and Chinese Tibet, and made extensive explorations for which he was rewarded with the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1866, twenty years before it was awarded to me. I do not think that there is any other case of two men so closely connected receiving this distinction. Thomson was a most distinguished botanist and compiled the standard work "*Flora Indica*" at his own expense, the East India Company generously taking several copies!

The objects of the campaign were now achieved, but the armies were detained, greatly to the annoyance of Nott, who wanted to take his "beautiful troops" back to India in good order. On September 30 Pollock sent out an expedition under Major-General McCaskill to take the city of Istalif, north of Kabul, and if possible capture Mohamed Akbar. Istalif was a large and populous city on the slope of a mountain, the whole a mass of houses and forts surrounded by gardens and vineyards with strong enclosures. It was considered impregnable, and thousands of refugees had gone there from Kabul, while the approaches were guarded by hosts of marksmen. My father, with Christie's Horse, took part in the attack on this stronghold, which was carried by assault in the most daring way. The night which preceded the attack was bitterly cold and, as few of the officers or men were provided with cloaks or rugs, it was impossible to sleep. With daylight the attack began, and only after five hours' hand-to-hand fighting did the enemy begin to desert the city. Their women and children were seen streaming away in terrified confusion over the mountain heights behind the city and the steep passes to Kohistan. The whole of these rocky heights were covered with white-clad figures, and many of the unfortunate creatures—4,000, it was said—perished in the cold and snow. Of all the engagements in which my father, though a non-com-

batant, was something more than a spectator, this storming of Istalif was perhaps the most dramatic. It must be remembered that in those days, when there was neither field-hospital nor bearer corps, the surgeon had to attend to the wounded on the field, and to be in the thick of things to succour those who fell, but beyond this my father could never resist taking a hand in the fighting.

At length the authorities gave the desired permission, and Nott marched out of Kabul on October 10. By Pollock's orders, and against Nott's opinion, the citadel (Bala Hissar) was left untouched, but the bazaar was destroyed as an act of retribution. This somewhat illogical proceeding deprived the trading population of their livelihood and left the more warlike element unpunished. On their way Nott's force had to do a little fighting and skirmishing, but on December 23 they reached the banks of the Sutlej and crossed on a bridge of boats specially constructed and gorgeously decorated, though not very steady in appearance. In the "triumph" which followed—lines of gilded elephants salaaming, salvoes of artillery, banquets, balls, and so forth—every member of the army of Kandahar was fêted. But many, like my father, had little heart for it all, and were only anxious to get away to their families from whom they had so long been parted. My father received the medal "Kandahar, Ghuznee, Kabool, 1842," and some extra pay, and with as little delay as possible he left for Calcutta, obtained leave of absence, and went home on his first furlough, arriving some time in the spring of 1843. Years afterwards my eldest brother was calling on General —— at Mussouree, and found him a rough-spoken old fellow. "Hello! So you're a son of old 'Colkie'—fine man, much finer man than you'll ever be—fine soldier too!" My brother met others of my father's old friends, and Lord Napier of Magdala told him it was a joke with everyone that John Company had lost a good officer in Colquhoun and got a bad doctor!

General Nott was made a K.C.B. and Envoy to Oude, but he did not get, what he would have been glad of, any pecuniary reward. This, however, came to him later, when on his retirement the Company voted him £1,000 pension per annum. He did not live long to enjoy it, for he died of heart disease in 1845. I have always been specially interested in the hero of Kandahar, having heard so much of him from my father. Comparing the accounts given of him by friends and critics, I think he had a great similarity of character with my father, which may have accounted for some of the latter's partiality. No one can deny that he was a great general in his use and care for his men. His faults of character—hastiness and obstinacy—were great, but my father often said that he inspired confidence in a degree which is only attained by first-rate leaders—his pride and affection in his “beautiful regiments” were met with devotion and complete trust. On the other hand he is accused, and not without some show of reason, of being niggardly in his praise of his subordinates. His despatches compare unfavourably with those of Pollock, who was perhaps too lavish in the praise he bestowed. As a result the Kandahar troops came off very badly in the distribution of honours, receiving only one-tenth as many as were given to Pollock's force, although they had had three years' fighting in Afghanistan and had done more than any other force to preserve the honour of their country.

## CHAPTER II

### MY MOTHER GOES "HOME"

My father, as I said, sent his family home at the beginning of this campaign, for wives and children were not allowed to accompany the army. Afterwards the troops in garrison in Kabul, though not at Kandahar, did send for some of their women-folk, but my father must have been glad to think that his were safe at home.

From the pen of my eldest sister Agnes I have an account of these years, from her point of view, and a description of her journey home for the first time. This domestic narrative makes the other side of the picture. On the one hand we have the young doctor-soldier going up to Ferozepore and sharing in the horrors and triumphs of war; on the other the wife and babies "going home." This is the ever-present tragedy of British life in India, but in those days it was aggravated by the difficulty of communication. My mother spent many months without news, and after Kandahar was besieged she heard only through the public despatches that the garrison was still holding out. None of this anxiety, or at least very little, could be shared by her little girls, to whom the journey home was the most exciting and fascinating experience. Agnes was five, and her two little sisters—Janet and Felicia—were three and two, while there was a baby boy born at Cawnpore not long before the troops and my father were ordered to the front.

Agnes remembers Cawnpore and our uncle, Sir James Dennis (married to my father's sister), who commanded the Buffs and was quartered there at this time. He was in command of an infantry brigade of the Army of the

Indus at Ferozepore, but on the change of plans and resignation of Fane he and his brigade were left in India, to their great disgust. He was a widower with one son, James, who was afterwards killed in the Crimea, and he was very kind to my mother and her little ones, who loved to go and play round the bandstand in his *compound*, where the band played when he had guests for dinner. The Buffs and their colonel were celebrated for hospitality. There were usually two bungalows in each of these *compounds*, sometimes connected by long, shady corridors or verandahs, and these form the principal recollections of Anglo-Indian childhood, just as the English child remembers the gardens where such splendid games were carried on. The little girls, followed by their indulgent *ayahs*, played about all day long, while their mother, surrounded by *durzees*, was giving directions for the making of innumerable little garments for use on the voyage home, or was superintending the inept *ayahs* and *bearers* in their packing of huge trunks.

The journey to Calcutta was of course made on the river, and a boat called a *budgerow*, somewhat resembling an Egyptian *dahabceah*, was hired, stored and furnished, and equipped with a full complement of servants. The *budgerows* were heavy boats, spoon-shaped below and at stern, with a rough native carved figure-head in the bows. There were two cabins, with venetian windows to lift up, and a flat roof. Except when the breeze was strong enough to fill a heavy sail they were "tracked" by the numerous crew. Agnes and Janet were wildly excited and pleased with their floating home, and even the parting with papa, which left their poor mother so heavy-hearted, did not depress their spirits. My mother, like other English women, must have needed some courage to undertake the journey alone, to a country she had never seen, with four babies—she herself a mere girl of twenty-two.

A few days after they started, she was terribly frightened

by a fight amongst the servants, who took advantage of the absence of any *sahib*. One of them was nearly killed and thrown overboard, but eventually he was picked up again and the boat proceeded on its voyage down the beautiful river. Every evening it was anchored alongside the bank, and the children could stretch their little legs, while the servants made fires and cooked their curry and *chupatties*. Agnes and Janet liked to watch them mixing and baking great piles of these thin cakes, which they afterwards seasoned with a little curry and devoured in immense quantities.

One horror of the voyage remains with my sister still. As she sat on deck she often saw long, white-shrouded figures floating solemnly down stream, and understood from her mother that they were "dead-ers" who were thrown into the Ganges to insure that they should float to heaven. One day, however, when she was stooping out of one of the cabin windows, which were nearly level with the water, one of these corpses passed right beneath, so that the horrid thing was almost touching her. The flesh was half eaten by fishes, and the sudden realisation of the horror of death and the dissolution of the body broke upon her childish imagination and gave her an unforgettable fright and shock.

At Calcutta the little family went to the Fort, and stayed a few days before sailing in the Indiaman. Here they were entertained by connections of my father, Mr. Gideon Colquhoun and his nephew James, both of them rich Calcutta merchants living in the princely, lavish style common to "nabobs" in those days but never seen now. These gentlemen unfortunately had business reverses, and only a few years afterwards my mother and sisters, who had enjoyed the splendid hospitality of Mr. James Colquhoun in Calcutta, met his widow economising at Boulogne with her children. Such contrasts were very typical of Anglo-Indian life of that time.

On the journey home my mother had a large stern cabin with a bath next it, and was as comfortable as circumstances would allow. The ship was full of officers and their wives and the *baba log*, their pale, spoilt children, with attendant *ayahs*. At the Cape they stopped for a week—a delightful change for all—and my mother took her little brood to a hotel where even the primitive accommodation, accompanied as it was by fresh food, seemed luxury after the confinement of the ship. Agnes remembers the drive to Constantia to see the vineyards, which was an invariable trip for the tourist.

London was reached at last, and my poor little mother on her first arrival in England was met by one of the handsomest and liveliest of her sisters-in-law — Mrs. Dempster—who laughed and talked a great deal and made fun of the pale little Indian children chattering away in Hindostance. She made fun, too, of the unfashionable clothes manufactured by the *durzees*, and carried my mother off to buy “something decent” at the fashionable shops. Agnes was particularly struck with baby Hugh, decked out in a huge Leghorn hat with blue ostrich feathers. Carried in the arms of a new English nurse, he seemed to her a most imposing and fashionable baby.

Once more the family had to embark on a ship—a dirty little boat it looked after the great Indiaman—and on the Leith packet they made the journey to Edinburgh, where their grandmother lived.

The picture of this home-coming is very vivid to me, although it happened before I was born. Grandmamma was a Scottish lady of the old type—the “young-people-should-be-seen-and-not-heard” school. She lived in the house in Carlton Street, at the corner of St. Bernard’s Square, which my father had bought, and everything in that house was symmetrical and polished to a degree alarming to eyes accustomed to the mingled squalor and luxury of Indian life. Grandmamma was stately, tall and



handsome, always dressed in black satin with a white tulle ruche round her throat, and with a frilled white cap framing her face. Grandmamma's household went like clockwork, and the introduction of an Anglo-Indian lady and her four unruly babies was discomposing, to say the least of it. The first struggle began over deportment. Grandmamma sat erect on her chair and expected children to do the same. Moreover, they must not drum on the table with their fingers or kick the rungs of the chairs with restless feet.

Breakfast was served in true Scots style, with a big bowl of porridge for each child. None of them had ever seen this food, and, accustomed to highly-seasoned dishes, curry and rice and condiments, they could not summon up appetites for anything so plain. The battle of the porridge-bowl waged furiously amid the anxious remonstrances of my gentle mother, who tried in vain to reconcile the warring elements. Finally Dr. Dempster, a dear, kind old military-doctor uncle, who was stationed at the castle with his regiment, was called in and pronounced that it was not good for the children to be forced to eat what they didn't like. In subsequent days I often wished Dr. Dempster could have come to my rescue as he did to that of my sisters.

Grandmamma's house looked out on a square where there were big trees and a rookery. The children were delighted with this colony of birds and loved to hear the eternal caw-cawing and to see the rooks holding conferences. One day they looked out of the window and called out that beautiful white feathers were falling from the sky. It was their first sight of snow.

The winter in Edinburgh, a severe trial to the Anglo-Indian family, was enlivened by the presence of uncles, aunts and cousins, and especially the Frasers and Marrs. Archie and Jane Fraser, who were about the same age as my elder sisters, were great friends and playmates, and in after years, when Archie went to Australia, he kept up a

correspondence with Janet and cherished her letters until his death. This early friendship, begun before I was born, was recalled to me a few years ago when Archie Fraser's beautiful daughters, now married women, came over to England for the first time and told me how their father had always talked of his dear cousin Janet. Janet died in India in 1875.

In the spring (1840) following their first winter, when the fighting was just beginning round Kandahar, it was decided that the whole family must have change of air to get rid of coughs and colds. My mother and the two babies went first to Riddrie Park, near Glasgow, to stay with "Uncle Archy"—my father's cousin and son of the second Hugh Colquhoun of Underwood. Agnes and Janet followed later, and even after all their travels found something new and exciting in the voyage along the canal, which was then the favourite route between Edinburgh and Glasgow (the railroad was not opened till 1842). The boat, which was comfortably fitted up, was pulled by two horses, driven tandem with a post-boy riding on the leader, and there were relays every five miles. The journey took eight hours, but in fine weather was delightful, especially to young folks, for there was much to see on the banks. Dr. Geikie, in his "Scottish Reminiscences," speaks of this method of travelling as exceeding in comfort and interest any that he has known, but it would hardly be rapid enough for modern tastes. At Glasgow a soldier in uniform, Dr. Dempster's orderly, was heard enquiring for two little girls, to the great delight of Agnes and Janet, who were brought up among red-coats and loved soldier-servants much better than their grandmamma's prim maids. Then they had a long drive in a cab, and at last arrived at Riddrie Park, where mamma, Uncle Archy, and Aunt Lizzie were ready to receive them.

Uncle Archy was delightful, and did not laugh at the little girls who still found it difficult to speak English.

His housekeeper, Agnes Service, an old retainer of a class now passed away, was equally kind and indulgent, and, in short, the Anglo-Indians found themselves in an atmosphere of comfort and appreciation and were happier than they had been since leaving India. Riddrie Park and its master play a great part in my own recollections, and as they belong to a Scottish life which is fast disappearing I will give them some little description.

Mr. Archibald Colquhoun was a tea merchant in Glasgow, doing business in the big old-fashioned way. He used to get whole shiploads of tea from China, and supplied retail traders all over Scotland. His office was in St. Enoch Square, close to what is now the station, and his house, Riddrie Park, was a few miles out of Glasgow. To us children it seemed a very grand and beautiful place, but I know now that it was homely and delightful, without being in the least grand—a really suitable and comfortable home for a man of his station and means. The plain stone house had no pretension, but inside the rooms were numerous and spacious, and furnished with good carpets, curtains, and substantial and comfortable furniture—the best that could be bought in those days. Three house-servants and the indispensable Agnes Service kept this house in spotless order, and provided for the comfort of the numerous guests with whom Uncle Archy was always surrounded. The table was excellent, and on Christmas and other great days the dinners were something to be remembered. Every delicacy that the place and period provided were found on the table, with excellent wine and champagne—the latter rather seldom used in Scotland at that time. There was a lovely garden, full of delightful old-fashioned flowers, which were freely cut and arranged throughout the house, not with the decorative taste of later days, but in big stiff posies, which nevertheless seemed to harmonise with the rooms and had a sober, quaint charm of their own. What was more unusual, and shows that Uncle Archy

was a bit ahead of his times and station, was the range of hothouses and conservatories which provided never-to-be-forgotten grapes and melons and lovely flowers and ferns.

This house was the most comfortable I ever knew. Everyone who came into it was at once absorbed into the genial atmosphere which surrounded Archibald Colquhoun. Miss Elizabeth Colquhoun, "Aunt Lizzie," who lived with him, was equally delightful. I remember her fun and light spirits, and the whimsical vein in which she would "quiz" people, without a trace of ill-nature. She was talented, playing and singing the old Scots ballads, which seemed to us the most delightful music as we sat in the drawing-room at Riddrie Park. I daresay the drawing-room and Aunt Lizzie's music were Early Victorian, and would only raise a contemptuous laugh nowadays, but they were to us all part of a harmonious and delightful picture. Aunt Lizzie's water-colours, which we thought most beautiful, probably belonged to the same category, but I honestly got more pleasure out of them than out of many galleries of art treasures seen since.

Uncle Archy went every day to his office, where he sat in his private sanctum, surrounded by other rooms where clerks were tasting tea or writing in ledgers—it seemed a hive of important industry to youngsters. I think there could have been no happier child in the world than the favoured one who rapped at the door about 3.45 on a Saturday afternoon and was shown in to Uncle Archy's room, where he sat very busy among his papers, but not too busy to kiss the intruder. Then at four o'clock a trampling outside and the carriage with its sleek horses drew up, and soon Uncle Archy tucked away letters and took off his spectacles, and we went off hand in hand to drive out to Paradise for the week-end.

This belongs to my sister's memories, not to mine; for when I knew Uncle Archy he was not able to go to the office much, being partially paralysed with sciatica, to

which he was a martyr; but this made no difference to the cheery welcome which he gave to us at Riddrie Park. Once outside the office, business was never mentioned; and no "shop" was talked at Riddrie, where the whole atmosphere was that of home and relaxation. Especially in his later years, when partially lamed with sciatica, Uncle Archy was a great reader, and I remember the house being full of books, as well as containing many good paintings and other objects which showed that our uncle was a man of culture. In this respect Riddrie was in advance of the Scottish middle-class home of the period. Unlike the lairds of whom Sir Walter Scott spoke, Mr. Colquhoun had a library, and all new publications found their way there. I remember tumbling into Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" with immense delight, and also of the eagerness with which we looked out for Thackeray's stories in *Cornhill* and for *Blackwood*, the *Saturday Review* and the *Edinburgh*—many of the articles much over my head, but still I browsed on them.

Once a year there was a great function at Riddrie, when all Mr. Colquhoun's commercial travellers dined in state, with the clerks of the office and all engaged in his business. At Christmas a great gathering of relatives took place, and presents for everyone were laid out on a table in the parlour and distributed after midday dinner. Uncle Archy never married—why I do not know, for he was fond of ladies and devoted to children.

Chiefly I bless his memory for his chivalrous devotion to my mother, to whom he was always the best, the most disinterested of friends. I think her youth, inexperience, and loneliness must have appealed to his kind heart, and certainly from the first time she and her children set foot in Riddrie Park they had a home and a second father in Scotland. I do not apologise for giving such a detailed portrait of a Scottish gentleman of the old school, who lived in an age when wealth did not mean ostentation, and when hospitality and comfort were found without

any attempt at grandeur or luxury beyond one's true station. "The memory of the just is blessed."

My mother and her children spent the summer of 1840 and the following summers at Riddrie. The winters were passed at Edinburgh, where they took a furnished house. The little Anglo-Indians were not bothered with lessons, but allowed to run wild in the garden at Riddrie, and grew round and rosy-cheeked and lost their Indian pallor and languid ways.

One night, when the little girls were tucked up in bed, they were awakened by a great noise of laughter and talking, and someone came with great strides up the nursery stairs and picked them out of bed and kissed and hugged them. And it was papa home from the war! It was nearly five years since they had seen papa, and he had grown to be almost a shadow in the children's minds. Now he burst upon them as something new and delightful—a big, handsome, indulgent papa, who was always laughing and singing and playing on the flute, and who let them play with his beautiful sword and told them wonderful stories about the Afghan war.

After a short stay in Scotland he decided to carry my mother off to see something of the continent of Europe, and accordingly the little folks were placed at a home school at Stirling. This was a lovely old-fashioned house and garden at the foot of the Castle, and only a few children were taken. Education was elementary, and the gentle ladies who kept the school left little impression on Agnes, save that they took her and Janet to church on Sundays and (what was far more interesting) read Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" to them in the evenings. Near Stirling lived relatives, the Sconces, whose hospitable house stood close to the racecourse.

After their Continental trip my father and mother returned to London, where my sister Helen was born; and as soon as she was old enough to travel they went to Scotland and chose a good school for their elder children

before returning to India. It seemed to my father that the time had come when Misses Agnes and Janet, now big and handsome girls—Agnes was a real beauty—ought to be turned into young ladies and given a polite education. The school selected was the Misses H.'s of Glasgow, both then and later a fashionable seminary.

I knew this school in later days, and went once or twice to call for my nieces, and even at that time the grim and rigid propriety of the place struck a regular chill to my heart. When my elder sisters went there there were twenty-five boarders and about sixty day scholars. The strictest discipline prevailed, no speaking being allowed in school. Exercise was taken by the unfortunate boarders in the form of walks, two-and-two, and on Sundays (when the blinds were all drawn down and every book of a secular character put away) they were marched to church three times a day.

No one who had not experienced it could realise the rigours of a Scottish "Sawbath" at this time, and even later. In my own boyhood I well recollect that even a Sunday walk was regarded as a secular diversion—it was only excusable if the cemetery was the goal! At the Misses H.'s school they had the rigour of the game, and the Shorter Catechism—that unspeakably long and dreary affair—filled up the odd moments left over from plain meals and church-going. The food was plain to coarseness—it was well that the Anglo-Indians had found Scottish appetites. The prospectus spoke of "simple and abundant fare." This consisted of bread and weak tea for breakfast and supper, and a plain dinner of two courses in the middle of the day. For the meagre supper the young ladies dressed in low-necked frocks, and after supper they had to prepare their lessons.

Life would have been unbearable but for occasional excursions to Riddrie, where Uncle Archy and Aunt Lizzie spoilt and pampered them and stuffed them with good things. Master Hugh was the only one who was

happy in this rigorous atmosphere, for, being the only boy, he was petted and kissed by everyone, and rather missed his privileges when he came to leave. For the holidays, however, discipline was relaxed, and Miss H. took a cottage at Arran or Rothesay, where there was sea-bathing, shell-gathering, paddling in the burn, and generally a return to freedom like young colts with the bridle off. "After all these years," my sister says, "the freshness and delight of that time are quite vivid again. After all my wanderings I give the palm to Arran for exquisite beauty. Goatfell, with its granite peak, rising up close to the beautiful Bay of Brodick at its foot . . . everywhere lovely walks and drives. When I was at Rothesay the Queen paid her first visit to the west coast of Scotland, on the *Victoria and Albert*. There was an enthusiastic reception and the whole bay was illuminated. The following morning, when out in a small boat, we had the pleasure of seeing the Queen and Prince Albert, and the little Prince of Wales, dressed in kilts, standing on the paddle-box waving his bonnet."

Far away on a Georgian plantation my sister sees in her memory picture-book the cold blue sky and the purple heather of Scotland. Only an exile knows how beautiful that vision is.

One of the peculiarities of the polite seminary of the Misses H. was that they did not allow dancing to be taught; and I suppose this, and other evidences of the narrowness of their mental and moral horizon, caused Mr. Colquhoun of Riddrie and his sister much misgiving. Eventually they obtained permission from my parents to take the children away, and placed them in a very different home with some old friends near Glasgow who took no other scholars. This house was like Riddrie in its comfort, homeliness, and the atmosphere of goodness which pervaded it. The inmates were cultivated people of literary tastes, and of an evening, while the girls sat round the table with their needlework, the fine old head



of the family read aloud Sir Walter Scott's novels in a deep sonorous voice, which gave still more beauty to the rounded periods. In this way the whole of the magic storehouse of the Waverley Novels was unfolded before these young people ; and in the summer afternoons, under a large pear-tree in the garden, one of the daughters of the house read to them "The Lady of the Lake," "Marmion," and other poems. Do modern girls hear Sir Walter read out loud, I wonder? Twice a week they walked into Glasgow to attend the dancing-school, and on Sundays the whole family trooped to church and sat in a big front pew in a gallery where, says my sister, "the view was so interesting that I fear we heard little of the discourses." One day, when the young ladies were coming home from their dancing-school, the Chartist riots broke out. Windows were shattered, the military called out, and a policeman hurried them off along a deserted street.

While their children were absorbed in their own little griefs and pleasures the parents were going through a most trying time. They got back to India in January, 1845, and almost immediately the Sikh war broke out, and the 43rd, which my father had rejoined, went once more to the front. With this regiment and with the 23rd he was through several engagements. At Ferozeshah the Sikhs were attacking, and here the heroic George Broadfoot was killed. My father's horse was shot under him, and he lost a button off his tunic and had a bullet through his helmet, but then, as ever, he escaped without a wound, being said by his comrades to bear a charmed life. Victory wavered from one side to another, and the victors lost one-seventh of their numbers and were too exhausted to prevent the Sikhs from crossing the Sutlej and preparing for fresh operations. It was a critical moment in Indian history. The victory of Aliwal followed, and then, on February 10, Sohraon.

My mother and her little girl went up with my father, and with Lady Sale and other women and children were

placed in a fort during the engagements. The 43rd was one of the four regiments that opened the attack at Sobraon, which was said by Sir Herbert Edwardes to be by far the finest attack of the whole campaign. The Sikhs fought desperately; not one surrendered or asked for quarter. Inside the fort the sufferings were great. The army was short both of food and water. It was very cold at night, and the moans and shrieks of the wounded and dying who were brought in to be attended to added to the horror. To complete my mother's sufferings, her little girl Helen developed whooping-cough, of which she died.

It was in this campaign that my father made the acquaintance of Napier (afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala), to whom reference is made elsewhere, and of Loch (later Lord Loch) then about seventeen years of age and a cornet in a Bengal cavalry regiment, acting as A.D.C. to Gough. Forty-five years later, when Administrator of Mashonaland, I served under Loch, then High Commissioner in South Africa.

When the first Sikh campaign ended my parents went to Simla, thinking the climate might help to restore my father's health, for he was suffering very much from rheumatism, but it soon became apparent that he could not go on service again, although still a young man—only forty years of age—and much as he desired to stay on a few more months in order to earn the special pension to which he would have been entitled after twenty years' service, he was obliged to resign in 1847, after nineteen years' service, and accompanied my mother home. Had he served three years more he would probably have become Surgeon-General, for there were only two men senior to him and both retired. This would have meant a very fine pension.

On the way home I made my appearance, in a violent storm, when the ship—the *Alfred*—was off the Cape of Good Hope. This was in the year of revolution—the fateful '48. On arrival my father tried the waters at Bath,

and then at various Continental spas, and for two or three years the family moved about with him. When his health was somewhat restored he began to go up to London a good deal. He had brought back a considerable sum from his Indian service, and was induced, like so many retired veterans, to dabble in speculation. He became acquainted with a company promoter whom we will call Jim Courtney, a well-known man in his day, having made a large fortune. By his advice my father invested practically his whole fortune in indigo shares, then a very paying affair. Shortly after, Mr. Courtney—who had acted as his broker—frightened my father by declaring that the bottom had dropped out of indigo, and that he must sell out at once; and out of "friendship," as it was he who had recommended the investment, he took my father's shares off his hands at a "dead loss"—so he said. Strange to relate, indigo shortly after took a change for the better, and my father descended upon his "friend" with great wrath. All the people who knew him in his prime agree that my father in a rage was not a person to be trifled with.

Apparently Mr. Jim Courtney was of this opinion, for he immediately cast about how he could remove the doctor from the scene of action. At this time the Australian gold fever was at its height. Everyone was more or less crazy about Ballarat and "the hundred pound nugget," and expeditions went forth like Argonautic cruises, or rather perhaps in the spirit of the Elizabethan adventurers on the Spanish main. Mr. Jim Courtney had a company which had secured concessions of land for gold digging in Australia, and he proposed to my father to go out as manager on a salary starting at £1,000, to be largely increased as soon as the digging had begun in earnest. My father accepted this offer, and in 1853 a steamer called the *Antelope* was chartered, to take out the manager and twenty-five Cornish miners with their families. The voyage by steamer usually took two

months, sailing ships often taking about four. The *Antelope*, however, named after the fleetest of God's creatures, made the slowest voyage on record. At one time there was a mutiny on board, and the mate had to stand over the ringleaders with a pistol in each hand while they were put in irons, and then the rest of the malcontents were set to holystone the deck, and kept at that job until they cried for mercy and begged the captain's pardon. When the captain held service on Sunday the miners, a very rough crew, tried to break up the meeting, singing and whistling or telling objectionable stories and jokes at the tops of their voices.

The *Antelope* began by breaking down in the Channel, and had to put back for repairs. Again she was disabled off the Azores and had to call in there to refit, while a third accident occurring in the South Atlantic compelled her to alter her course and run for Brazil, where she put in at Rio and had to be docked. After this she was able to make Melbourne, with only one call (at the Cape) for the inevitable repairs, and finally after six months, during which time she had been several times reported missing at Lloyd's, she hove in sight of the promised land. As soon as she arrived at Melbourne the twenty-five Cornish miners slipped ashore and "vamoosed" for the gold-diggings on their own account, leaving my father and the ship's captain to look after their twenty-five wives and fifty or sixty children! The only thing to be done was to turn them over to the colonial authorities, and this accomplished, Doctor Colquhoun hunted up the company's Australian agent and general manager. He found him—in Yarra graveyard, to which he had been consigned while the *Antelope* had been making her speedy voyage. The company's claims had been "jumped," as the law only gave a limited grace for unworked claims. My father had to wait for instructions from home—a matter of four months to write and get a reply. When it came it was most satisfactory—on paper—my father's salary being raised

to £3,000, and lawyers being set to work to recover the "jumped" claims. The correspondence which followed constituted all my father's occupation, and as days lengthened into weeks, weeks into months, and months into years, he had to fill in his time and did so by paying visits to all the different colonies, where he made many friends.

At last the company made up their minds to pocket their losses and cease to throw good money after bad, and they paid my father's fare home. What proportion of his salary had reached him I do not know.

As for the ingenious Mr. Jim Courtney, he went the way of wicked company promoters (in fiction). After rolling in riches for some years he came utterly to grief, and was seen furtively frequenting cheap eating-houses in very shabby clothes.

My father returned to the bosom of his family after three years' absence when I was eight years old, and from this time onward he did no work of any kind. He was advised, and even pressed, to set up in practice, but he had absolutely no taste for his profession. His contemporary, Dr. Laurie, who was just senior to him and retired three years later, built up a fine practice in Glasgow, but my father was not so fortunate as to make a second career for himself, though he had plenty of ability. There is a story of a postman with whom he used to chat every evening when he went out to smoke a cigar (no smoking was allowed inside his house). This man had a gathering in his calf, for which he wanted my father to prescribe. The doctor refused once or twice; at last he said: "Won't have any other doctor, won't you? All right, come inside and I'll take it off for you in a jiffey!" The postman left in a hurry and troubled him no more.

The rest of my father's life was passed at Glasgow, Helensburgh, and (the last twenty years) in Edinburgh. He drew his pension for forty-two years, and was

wont to say he was "one of the Company's bad bargains."

While my father was away in Australia his mother died, and at her death occurred a scattering of family papers and possessions which has deprived her grandchildren of many things which would have been of interest to them. It happened in this wise. One of my aunts, a very handsome and impetuous woman, and the only one who lived in Edinburgh after her marriage, was unfortunate enough to have a husband and sons of most extravagant character. At College my father had a great friend, the son of the famous African traveller Bruce, and to his care he commended his mother and sister when he was away. My aunt was a most fascinating woman, and the Bruce family became much attached to her for her own sake as well as my father's, and eventually left her all their property, including an estate near Edinburgh and house property in that city. After her marriage she lived on this estate, but she retained her influence with her mother. When the latter died my aunt took the disposal of affairs into her own hands during my father's absence, and when he returned he found that everything had been sold or taken away—even his silver christening cup and the Indian treasures which he had stored in the house. An absolutely clean sweep had been made, and as my father's devotion to his mother had led him to either leave with her or give for her use anything he possessed of any value, including all family pictures, silver, and papers, we are singularly poor in those interesting relics.

At this time he could doubtless have recovered some of this property, but only at the cost of exposing a family quarrel, a course most repugnant to his reserved nature. He did nothing, but cherished a deep sense of wrong and resentment against the sister who had treated him so badly. I used to visit this aunt at her beautiful home, but it was not long before she lost it and all her other property through reckless extravagance. Her children

went to the colonies and we lost sight of them, but I met one, only a few years ago, at the Victoria Falls on the Zambesi. It is hardly possible for a Scotsman to move about the less frequented parts of the globe without encountering his own kith and kin!

I have at least one consolation, in the absence of family portraits, that had they survived they would probably have been, like those of many other Scots families, a hard-featured lot! Good portraits are, in fact, very rare among Scottish families, for painting was a trade little accounted of north of Tweed until comparatively modern times, and for one or two who possessed really fine pictures by Raeburn or Jameson or by an English painter there are hundreds whose galleries were filled by wandering limners at five pounds Scots apiece—including the frame. The kings and queens at Holyrood were supplied by Jacob de Witt, working on contract, at £250 to supply 150 portraits within two years (1684—85).

Before beginning my personal reminiscences I will briefly outline the history of some of the other members of the family. My eldest brother, Hugh, who now lives in Georgia with my sister Agnes, Mrs. Ross, was sent out to Australia as an engineer and surveyor, thence went to India, and eventually to the Southern States of America. After my father returned from Australia two more children were born to him, Gideon and Florence, and the former also went out to India to a tea plantation when very young and then joined Hugh in America, where he was killed in a railway accident. My sister Florence married Colonel F. Burgess, and also went to India—all our family seemed to gravitate there. My mother died in 1863, and in 1864 my father married Miss Bessie Johnstone, and had two daughters and three sons—his total family being thirteen. His youngest son, having been born when he was nearly seventy, may well be alive 150 years after the year of his father's birth—an extraordinary range to be covered by two generations, but one that can be beaten

within my own acquaintance. I recently met a distinguished Orientalist whose eldest half-brother was contemporary with my father—indeed, a few years older, having been born in the last years of the 18th century. My friend has a son of tender years who may well be alive in 1985. He will then be able to speak of “my uncle who was born nearly 200 years ago”!

There are one or two stories about my father in his later years which are worth repeating. He used to attend a weekly prayer meeting at his church, and on one occasion the deacon who conducted this function, an Edinburgh tradesman, saw fit to “put up” a special petition for Dr. Colquhoun, with whom he had had some argument over church matters. My father rose to his feet, Christian humility being out of the question under such circumstances, and strode to the door, my gentle step-mother in great confusion trotting after him, and at the door father paused and announced in his gruffest voice, “I’ll not sit there and listen to that idiot hawering!” The deacon had the impertinence after this to address post-cards to the old man exhorting him to repentance for his sin of pride, and the result was that my father never went to prayer meeting again. The custom of putting up petitions by name is not one that commends itself to one’s taste in public meeting, but of course it used to be quite usual in Scotland. Many families kept it up in the morning and evening prayer which, till quite recently, was *de rigueur* in all well-regulated households. I myself knew one where the head of the house might be expected to lay the peccadilloes of his children before the Almighty at any moment, and even visitors were not safe. An irreverent daughter was once heard admonishing the pet dog: “Be good, or I’ll pray for you!” and she disconcerted her father by a petition that when he had finished wrestling with the Lord for her she might be allowed to do the same for him! Now, the old man was the only person in the house who was never



interceded for, but the suggestion was not one that, from the point of view of a Free Kirk member, he could refuse. A young friend of mine, staying in the Hebrides a few years since with an old relative who ministered to a small flock, was startled one Sunday morning to hear boomed from the pulpit, "And now, O Lord, we beseech Thee for this stranger within our gates, who is very far from keeping within the strait and the narrow way, for has he not been seen consorting with the daughters of Belial and taking part in profane revelry, which is not acceptable to Thee?"

This appalling accusation arose out of the fact that he had attended a village dance the night before, to which, in his secular character, his host had not been at all averse. But after putting on his gown and bands and getting into the pulpit it is to be presumed that he cast his mind over the possible lapses of the congregation for the week past, and after the tameness of their usual proceedings could not resist the opportunity for a little bit of rhetoric. This same parson was a profound Greek scholar, having broken down through over-study, and it was strange to sit in the mean little church among the poor and ignorant fisher folk and hear him rolling over their heads some fragment of old philosophy, in the original Greek, qualifying his remarks with "Sophocles, poor soul, was a benighted heathen; he had not the Word, but——"

Before closing this chapter, in which my father is the hero, although the narrative may ramble away from him sometimes, I must take my readers into my confidence as to the material from which I have had to reconstruct his personal adventures. I have said he was reticent as to himself, and he was moreover as averse to putting pen to paper as is his son; for I must confess that without an amanuensis neither I nor my typewriter would be able to earn a living. She, poor lady, would be worried into an early grave by the hieroglyphics which I should with

infinite exertion spread over many half-sheets of note-paper. My father had the same preference for this form of memorandum—now sanctioned by the highest political authority—and I have by me at this moment a collection of half-sheets scrawled over in pencil. At some period of his later life he was evidently inspired with the idea that some record of his early adventures would be appreciated by his descendants, or he meant to comply with the reiterated request of his friends to write down some of his experiences. The intention was never realised, but the notes remain. Some people have the art of making notes at once brief and graphic. Some have not.

The reader shall judge some of these for himself.

“Burma — Tiger — Moulmein — Pirates — *Woongyee's* daughter—Snakes—*Balachoung*—Denny's dead horse—Judson—Wilson stabbed—Adventure—Packed off—Fire in ship—Go to hell—Duel—Cholera—Sale of clothes—Mutiny—Sail for Penang—Ship's distress—Cupmate—Agar's mutiny—Sir R. Arbuthnot—Free Kirk Dalrymple—‘Cholera Sam.’”

From these and other notes, largely supplemented by memories of old stories told by him now and then, and still more by his friends, I know that my father was in Burma in 1826, where he seems to have had a lively time, at Moulmein, Penang and elsewhere, with the *Woongyee's* daughter, mutinies, stabbings, a duel, snakes, and other incidents. On one occasion I know he fell ill of cholera and was believed to be dead, and the news being sent to the place where he had left his effects they were promptly sold, so that when he turned up he found everything gone. It was then apparently that he took boat for Penang and had an adventurous voyage, but we are left to conjecture who went to a place unmentionable in polite society.

The following must be read in the light of my description of field ambulance work in the Afghan War:—  
“Amputating scenes — Deaths — Tent work — After

Ferozeshah—Ghilzie—Effects of *poojah* (holiday-making) on apoplexy and cholera — Denny Mit. pills No. 43—Walker and I—No medicine—Woman shot through body—Girl shot at Ghirishk—Chief in neck—W. between camels — Sunday wax candles—Let down tent — Dr. Fleming—Short food—Mrs. Manning—Round Kabul—Loss of shawl—Ensign shoots men outside gate—Jail Kandahar—Blowing off chief (see p. 36) — Four men princes murder Europeans; wonder not all—Tortures of princes—Seat at gate—Justice—Courage of servants and *dhooly* bearers—Battle of Gwynne—Skirmish that morning—Sales of officers' effects—Death scenes—Worsley, Dr. Barnby, Hart, Dr. Jacob Walker—Blond man, law of compensation."

The whole of this, when once deciphered, was perfectly intelligible except the last sentence, where my father, contrary to his wont, was apparently indulging in philosophical reflections. What were the compensations of a blond man? This is the sort of historic puzzle that should attract Mr. Andrew Lang, but I make a present of it to anyone who cares to try!

## CHAPTER IV

### MY BOYHOOD

LIKE my sister, some of my earliest recollections hover round the island of Arran, where we were often taken in the summer, but, unlike hers, my memory has a touch of bitterness. I think it must be characteristic of some children that they are most struck with the injustice and disappointments of life.

There was a postman at Arran, one of those long-bearded, soft-spoken Highlanders who charmed us little "leddies and gentlemen" with his deferential ways and flattering remarks. I used to go out to meet him every morning, hanging around till he came in sight, for he had promised me that one day he would bring me a "bonnie wee boat" for my very own. Oh, that boat! Never was such a beauty for swiftness, and the white sails of her and the green paint and the wee seats and the anchor and a'! With such descriptions the old man beguiled me of my weekly penny for many weeks—it was to help beautify the boat. I don't know when, where, or how it dawned on me that I was being fooled, that there was not, and never would be, any boat! Up to the last day of our stay in Arran I believed in my friend and his promise, and was dragged away in tears, thinking that one more day and the boat—the bonnie wee boat—would have been mine.

Some years afterwards, in the dawning worldly wisdom of ten years or so, I suddenly realised his treachery, and my heart is black to-day even at the thought of him. Nothing in my whole life has made such a lasting impression on me as this childish incident, or has caused me a

tenth part of the suffering which I endured over it. For one thing, I was a lonely child. My elder brothers and sisters were at school; there were about nine years between me and the younger ones, Florence and Gideon, who were born after my father's return from Australia. No doubt, I thought them mere babies—at any rate, they could not share in my joys and sorrows. I have felt the pangs of disappointment since—deferred promotion, foiled ambition—but nothing—nothing—has hurt like the treachery of the Arran postman and his phantom boat!

My other vivid recollection is of a river, with men salmon-fishing, with whom I made friends. This was the river Doon, in Ayrshire, in the Burns country, where we had a house for some time. My fishermen friends gave me my first smoke, and I remember the consequences and the physical prostration that followed, and my flight for consolation to a kindly cook.

My father's absence during three of the most impressionable years of my life, and the fact that I was the pet of my mother and elder sisters, undoubtedly encouraged in me a spirit of independence and wilfulness which was to develop into what my father called "insubordination." After his return my recollections of life are chiefly concerned with a perpetual warfare, in which my part was taken by a devoted army of sympathetic female friends—chiefly in the kitchen—who shielded me from observation at critical moments, and came to my aid with plates of pie when adversity had overtaken me. My mother stood between, a gentle presence but unable to influence or control my father; so I took refuge with some fat cook, and I have a distinct recollection of the comfort of burrowing my head on plump and kindly bosoms, and being hugged and consoled with after severe castigation. For I am obliged to confess that at this time my father developed into a domestic tyrant. Probably the ill-health from which he had suffered affected his temper, and in any case he had the rigid ideas about the up-bringing of

children common to his generation. His life in India had encouraged in him a natural tendency to be autocratic, and my mother was far too sweet, gentle, and unworldly to be able to control him. He had probably been brought up on Spartan lines himself by our grandmother, and he desired to do the same by his sons. He was at his best when old cronies came to stay or to dine and talk over old times, but as time went on he grew more reserved with us, and would seldom trouble to tell us tales or amuse us with stories of what he had seen and heard.

We lived in a flat in Glasgow at one time, and I was sent to the academy, and afterwards I went to a private school at Helensburgh, where my parents came to live with my little brother and sister. My sisters Agnes and Janet were now young women and their high spirits could not brook my father's domineering ways. Felicia married very young (when I was about eight years old) the brother of a school friend. I have a distinct picture in my mind's eye of the big drawing-room in our Glasgow flat, with a space cleared for the bride and bridegroom, and the crowd of girls in light dresses, and my own beautiful kilt, and a lot of wedding-cake which I consumed afterwards in secret. Janet lived most of the time at Riddrie and with other friends, until she went out on a visit to our cousin, Jane Irving, in India, where she married Captain M. H. Court.

By a curious coincidence one of her girl friends afterwards met Captain Court's father, an Indian civilian, and married him, their meeting being quite independent of the friendship between the two girls who thus became mother and daughter-in-law. Agnes also put in most of her time visiting, until she fell in love with and got engaged to George Ross, who was in the Oriental Bank. The failure of this bank altered his position, and my father objected to the match, but my handsome and high-spirited sister stuck to her choice and married him. She accompanied him to Ceylon and Japan and, after some

wanderings, to the United States, where they settled in Georgia. My nephews and nieces are more American than Scottish.

There is an anecdote of me at the age of nine or ten which shows what a cheeky little chap I was. My sisters were going out to some evening or late afternoon entertainment and the question of escort was mooted. I interposed loftily, "All right, girls, *I'll* take you! Pull down your veils, and I'll keep the rogues off!" As for my school life, I only recollect that I learnt nothing at all either at the Glasgow academy or at the Helensburgh school. I suppose it was my appalling ignorance and apathy which induced my father to send me to Neuwied on the Rhine, the school of the Moravian Fathers. He had his eye on a commercial life for me, and probably wished me to learn a modern language.

Neuwied in my time was a big school, with very few English boys in it, and the director was a little man with a huge head called Von Bülow, whom we all feared but respected. From what I remember of myself, I had an antipathy to doing anything expected of me which amounted to a mania. I don't think it was really natural to any child, but probably resulted from my father's theories of education applied to a boy with more than the average amount of obstinacy. I was on the defensive all the time, and my career at Neuwied might have developed, as at my previous schools, into an absolute struggle against being taught anything but for the intervention of a man who had the precious gift of insight. From the passionate devotion with which I afterwards regarded him I conclude that no one else had ever taken the trouble to understand me. I admired Von Stein to begin with, because he had fought a duel and (it was whispered) had killed his man. On one occasion, when I was to have received a well-merited punishment, Von Stein called me to him and spoke as man to man. He told me how insubordination had wrecked his own life, and then,

appealing to my pride, asked how I could bear to see the younger boys beating me in tasks which I could well do if I put my mind to it. In the American phrase, this got right home. I owe Von Stein a great deal.

Of course lessons were all in German, and I became quite proficient in that language, and got a very sound education generally of the commercial sort—no classics. I had been labouring at Latin at the academy, but all that slipped away and at the present moment I know about as much of the great languages of Greece and Rome as did Shakespeare!

I stayed about two and a half years at Neuwied and then came home and was “at a loose end” for a time, after which Uncle Archy’s office, once the open sesame of delight to my sisters, yawned to receive me, an unwilling victim, into its dark and dusty rooms. I spent as little time there as I possibly could. I was still the bookworm that had fed on “Burton’s Anatomy” in Uncle Archy’s library, and now all my spare cash was spent on books and magazines which, I am afraid, often went into the office and absorbed me a good deal more than Uncle Archy’s folios.

Soon after my return from Neuwied my mother died at Helensburgh, only my father and I and my youngest sister, Florence, being there. Miss Eliza Grant came to keep house for my father after this—one of the friends with whom my sisters had gone to live when they left Miss H.’s school—and she stayed with the family a long time. I think my Uncle Archy’s consent to take me into his office—a privilege for which I was never grateful, but which was intended to lead to something a good deal higher than an office stool—dates from this period, because his affection for my mother led him to desire to provide for me, and he knew that my life with my father was not an easy one. After about eighteen months my father, while on a stay at Harrogate, met the lady who became my stepmother and brought her home to Helensburgh. She



was about the age of my eldest sister, and in character resembled my good and gentle mother with a dash of humour and spirit which she owed, doubtless, to Irish blood. This spirit of gaiety and capability for enjoyment has not deserted her, although for many years she has been a partial invalid. She was nothing but a gay and charming girl, full of kindness for her husband's children, when my father brought her home. We chose, however, to resent this marriage and to regard her as a "wicked step-mother," so I am afraid her welcome into the family was a cold one.

My father's home was now in Helensburgh, and the distance from Glasgow, added (I am afraid) to my ungracious behaviour, involved my boarding with someone nearer my work, so I was very kindly received into the family of Mr. Henry Constable in Glasgow, one of the sons of the founder of the firm of publishers of that name. In his family circle I met with great kindness from his wife, a German lady. About this time I encountered certain theatrical lights of the period who awakened in me an enthusiasm for the theatre which would have been much against my father's principles. I do not think his religious scruples so much as his contempt for "mumming" were at the root of this. I fancy he must have been devoid of imagination, a quality as much needed in those days for the appreciation of the drama as it is superfluous now. He saw the tinsel and cardboard, and moreover, like George III., he "hated boetry." So my leanings to the stage were concealed from my parents and I enjoyed a pleasing sense of worldliness and dissipation in my harmless visits to the Theatre Royal, Glasgow. I went to see Helen Faucit, and remember her best as King Renée's Daughter. Titiens, Mario, and Grisi also paid a visit north, and I listened enraptured from my shilling seat in the gallery. Soon I became acquainted with real actors and actresses. The Glovers, lessees of the Theatre Royal, asked me to their house, and their daughter Julia seemed

to me a most adorable and unapproachable being. Kendal, who married Madge Robertson, was the *jeune premier* at the Theatre Royal, and appeared to me and my youthful friends to be not only the most astonishingly handsome but the most fashionable and dashing of young bloods. At a small theatre in the Cowcaddens (a district of Glasgow) I lost my heart to Henrietta Hodson and Lydia Thompson, especially when the latter sang her famous ballad "Come back to Erin, mavourneen!" A tragedian, whose name I do not remember, was condescending enough to come and have "a chop together" sometimes (I paying for the chop) and I remember with what pride I entertained this famous and distinguished person. There was a supper party at the Glovers' one night—they were most kind and hospitable people—and I felt as if I was really seeing life as I listened to the talk, which was, I have no doubt, exactly what one would hear to-day in any second-rate circle in "the profession," but it seemed to me to be scintillating with wit. I only remember to have met one artist in my semi-Bohemian circles, and that was Sam Bough, who after enjoying a merely local reputation in life is now, I understand, on the way to be considered a "master." He was a scene-painter in Edinburgh, but came to Glasgow to do some work for the Glovers occasionally, and I think he taught Sam Glover scene-painting.

One of my most vivid recollections is of hearing Dickens read "The Christmas Carol," and it is curious to me, when I dip into that piece of fustian nowadays, to remember what he made of it. It certainly owed a great deal to his dramatic force. I also went to hear Thackeray read portions of "The Four Georges," an entertainment far less to my youthful taste. Time has brought its revenges. Thackeray now charms where Dickens (in serious mood) bores me. On Sunday I went with my sisters to hear Dr. Norman MacLeod, who was at that time regarded as being extremely unorthodox by many people, but to us young people his broadness of view and his humanity

came as a refreshing change after the pulpit pedantry to which we were accustomed. It was no easy task to get into his church—the Barony Church—for it was always crowded. His letters reveal a charming character and are enlivened by witty and clever pen and pencil sketches. I remember that my sisters cried their eyes out over his little story of “Wee Davie,” which did not leave even my manly ones dry.

I really do not see how my father could have expected me to settle down in a Glasgow office. From my early years I had heard nothing but India—India—India. My baby ears had been filled with stories of war; my eldest sisters talked incessantly about the strange scenes of their earliest days (much of which they knew by hearsay only) and as I grew older and learned to be a “little pitcher” I listened to my father and his friends yarning away about adventures which made life in Scotland too tame for words.

I was a little boy of nine when the Mutiny happened, and my parents were in an agony of suspense which communicated itself to me. Then some of their friends came home, and a Colonel and Mrs. Lennox in particular came to our house with their daughter Bella, and told us the most wonderful tale of their escape.

The morning the Mutiny broke out Mrs. Lennox’s *ayah* came to her room very early and begged her not to allow the *Kurnel sahib* to go on parade, as the *sowars* meant to shoot down all their officers. This news she had from her lover, himself a soldier. Colonel Lennox would not believe it. “Would his children turn their hands against him?” Like General Nott, he had the greatest affection for his men and believed thoroughly in their loyalty, for they had before now followed him to the death. He could not be persuaded of the danger until the soldier-lover himself came in and gave him undeniable proofs. This man had been a driver of ox-carts, and had brought one with him, a closely-curtained box on wheels such as is

used by high-caste women on their journeys. Into this the Lennox family were hurried with the faithful *ayah*, who disguised her master and mistress and their daughter alike as Indian women. Huddled up in the cart, stifled by the close-drawn curtains, and aching in every limb with the cramped position to which stiff European legs are not accustomed, the Lennox family were driven out of their own compound, their rescuer sitting on the pole in front with a goad to urge the lumbering bullocks along.

They journeyed slow stages by day, not daring to show themselves outside the *purdahs*, and at night they got a little air and ate the food bought for them by their faithful servants. The roads were full of rebel soldiers, stragglers and camp-followers, and only the Indians' respect for the *purdah*, and the readiness of their driver, protected them.

At last it became too dangerous to go further, especially without knowing where safety could be found, as the wildest rumours were all they could pick up on the road. So they turned off to the estate of a big *zemindar* (landed proprietor) who had always been friendly to Europeans. Here they declared themselves to the *zemindar*, who was considerably surprised to see a Feringhee *sahib* and high officer disguised as a native woman. He received them kindly, however, sent the ladies into his *zenana*, and promised to take them all to the British lines in return for a money reward. They had to wait some little time, and the *zemindar* became very friendly with Colonel Lennox. At the same time, during his visits to his *zenana*, he became aware that Isabella Lennox, a girl of fourteen or fifteen, was exceedingly handsome, with big black eyes and raven hair. One day he calmly addressed her father with a proposal that he should marry her and make her his chief wife. With great presence of mind the colonel heard this proposal without any sign of emotion, but remarked that he must of course consult his wife. He

also pressed the *semindar* on the matter of his own escape, so much so that his prospective son-in-law declared he would go off at once and make inquiries as to the position of the British and the best way to get through to their lines.

As soon as he had departed, Mrs. Lennox—who was at once made aware of the danger in which they stood—went to the *semindar*'s head wife, an elderly but determined person, and told her in what danger she stood of being deposed from her position. A great consultation followed—much chattering and screeching; but Mrs. Lennox, knowing a good deal about native life, was able to suggest a solution. A very old, dirty, and much-venerated fakir was called in consultation with other Brahmins, and in the long run Isabella went through a ceremony which made her the *rance*'s daughter by adoption. The *semindar* returning, found his intended bride quite out of his reach and was furious, but did not want to lose the reward too. He had made all needful inquiries and arrangements, and hurried the Lennox family off to their compatriots.

Other of our friends were not so fortunate in the Mutiny, and more than one of the daughters of my father's friends were carried off to *senanas* and were not heard of again. I used to look at Bella, who was not much beyond my own age, and feel distinctly envious that a girl should have such adventures, while my life flowed on in a peaceful safety only varied by whackings from papa.

Never shall I forget the breathless interest with which I heard the story of Vincent Eyre's relief of the "Little House of Arrah," where a tiny garrison held out against great odds and were at their last gasp when Eyre, on his own initiative, reached them by a forced march in the very nick of time. The hero of this exploit was well known to my father.

Then I heard such names as Rawlinson, Broadfoot, Christie, Pottinger, Skinner and Gardner, and their stories, which I have since read in a more coherent form.

I heard them in the shape of legends and sagas of heroic character—enough to fire the imagination of any boy. Rawlinson was one of my best known heroes, and a real—not a mythical—figure, as he came to visit my father, having been in Kandahar, as noted already, during the two and a half years spent there. He went out to India a year before my father, at the age of seventeen, and at twenty-three was organising armies in Persia. On one occasion he did a wonderful ride, which must I think be a record for such achievements, comparing favourably even with Sir Harry Smith's exploit and that of the colonist Dick King, who rode through a country infested with hostile natives to bring help from Grahamstown to Durban. Rawlinson's ride was from Teheran to the Persian camp near Herat, 750 miles, which he did in seven days, and after a few days there he rode back again, doing the distance in 150 hours or at a rate of five miles an hour for six consecutive days. His sudden return was due to a curious adventure. As he neared his goal he met a party of horsemen in Cossack dress. Rawlinson rode up and addressed the young officer who led them, first in French, then in Persian, but neither elicited any reply. At last they managed to have a little conversation in Turkish, and the Cossack represented himself as the bearer of presents to the Persian commander. On reaching the Persian camp, however, Rawlinson learnt that the mission was in reality going from the Tsar to Dost Mohammed at Kabul, and when the party came up, the officer, Vikteich, was introduced formally to Rawlinson and spoke French perfectly. Asked for an explanation he said: "My dear sir, it would never do to be too familiar with strangers in the desert!" Poor Captain Vikteich (whom we met at Kabul) carried through his negotiations with great discretion, but returned to Russia at a moment when that country did not desire any further adventures and was disowned by Nesselrode, who refused to see him and said that the only Vikteich he knew of was an adventurer

lately engaged in unauthorised intrigues in Kabul and Kandahar! Viktevich went back to his hotel, wrote a few lines of reproach, burnt his other papers, and blew out his brains.

In 1840 Rawlinson was appointed assistant to Macnaghten in Afghanistan, and, as I have already said, was in Kandahar till 1842, where his experience and skill were invaluable. After all this activity Rawlinson deserted the military political career, refused two excellent appointments in India, and went back to Persia as consul-general at Baghdad, where he prosecuted the studies which were to make him world-famous as an Assyriologist. As an old friend of my father's he was one of my supporters in 1883, when, as President of the Royal Geographical Society, he advanced my claims to the gold medal of that Society, which he himself had obtained forty years before.

Eldred Pottinger, whom my father first met in Kabul, when he and the other prisoners and hostages were brought in from their long captivity, had a history which is truly remarkable when we remember that he was only thirty-three at the time of his death. He was a few years younger than my father, and went out to an uncle who held high office in Sind when he was a mere boy. From this relative he got permission to embark on a most perilous mission in Afghanistan to gather information, and this he accomplished, travelling to Kabul and Herat *viâ* Peshawar in various disguises. The extraordinary facility with which Pottinger and other men at this time learnt native dialects, and travelled as natives through most hostile country, is always a marvel to me. At Herat Pottinger found the Persians, accompanied by Russian officers, besieging that city, so threw off his disguise and offered his help in the defence. He was so useful and successful that he acquired great *prestige* with the Afghans and was ultimately appointed political agent in Herat. Pottinger could so thoroughly assume the habit and bearing of an Afghan that, when he went by command to meet Lord Auckland

on the frontier and was invited to dinner, he was nearly chucked out of the mess-tent by the officers assembled there, who resented the uninvited presence of a "native" !

Pottinger's behaviour while with the prisoners and hostages, after the Kabul disaster, was worthy of his reputation. He gave good advice, which was not always taken, and on one occasion at least he was prepared to blow up the prison in which he and his comrades were confined and escape in the confusion ! After all his hairbreadth adventures he was destined to die in his bed, having gone to visit his uncle at Hong Kong, where he was struck down with fever. I have read a great deal more about Eldred Pottinger than I knew in my boyhood, but the name had then, and still has, a smack of reckless daring about it—it brings a flavour of romance on to the dullest page of print for me. It seemed strange to me, many years after, to meet in London another Eldred Pottinger, a grandson of the reckless yet wise, daring yet prudent, hero of Kabul and Herat.

In 1843 my father was temporarily attached to the famous irregular horse raised by Skinner—Skinner's Horse—and thus became acquainted with one of the strangest and most romantic figures in India at the time. James Skinner—"old Secunder Sahib" as he was called in later days all over India—was the son of a Scots ensign in the East India Company's service by a Rajpootana lady of good family, whose father was a prosperous and influential *zemindar*. She was taken prisoner as a mere girl, and fell to Skinner as "loot." He married her after native custom, and James and other children were born to them. Being very badly off, the young officer could not give his son any advantages, and, according to James Skinner's own account, he got what he had of education at a charity school at Calcutta. In 1796, at the age of 18, he was apprenticed to a printer—the first English newspaper in Bengal had been started in 1780. Two days of this work were enough for the lad, who ran away with a few annas



in his pocket and worked in the bazaars, earning about fourpence a day and living in Indian style. Eventually he was traced through a servant who recognised him, and one of his brothers-in-law gave him a place in his office—a very uncongenial position to such a character. I used to have a sort of fellow-feeling for Skinner at this point in his career, and inquired anxiously as to his behaviour. He was on the point of running away again when his godfather, Colonel Burn, arrived on the scene and had an interview with him. "What do you want to do?" he asked, and James replied: "To be a soldier or a sailor!" Colonel Burn gave him 300 rupees and sent him up country to join his father at Cawnpore, where the Colonel himself was to go shortly. On arrival he found that he could not place young Skinner in the Company's service, and he accordingly gave him an introduction to General de Boigne (an old friend and originally a *protégé* of his) who was then in command of the Mahratta army. This was the husband of the lady, Madame de Boigne, whose lively memoirs were published in 1907 and created quite a sensation. De Boigne made James Skinner an ensign, with pay of Rs. 150 per *ensem*. He remained for some years in the Mahratta service and developed as a great leader of irregular cavalry. His knowledge of native life and dialect gave him a great advantage and he was much loved by his men, over whom he had boundless influence. He lived among them with a sort of Asiatic magnificence, and his life was a series of those adventures and rapid transitions from luxury and pomp to danger and privation which are a feature of true Oriental life. In 1803 Skinner, with other Englishmen, was dismissed by the Mahrattas and entered the Company's service, being given a commission to raise a body of irregular horse, which eventually numbered as many as 1,800 men. He had the pick of men from all parts of India, so great was his fame and popularity, and although in ordinary life a quiet-looking individual I have heard my father say that Secunder

Sahib at the head of his "yellow boys" was transfigured into something wild and fierce and magnificent. Each man owned his own horse, and the uniform was yellow and gold—a splendid if barbaric cavalcade they must have been. A halo of Asiatic magnificence and mystery hung round Secunder Sahib to the end of his days, which came in 1844, about the time that my father left India on his first and only furlough. Skinner left a large fortune, and some of it went to found a school at Lucknow. His descendants are numerous and may well be proud of him. Unfortunately he could never be induced to commit any of his recollections to paper, though he loved to tell the stories of his youth to his friends and visitors (among whom was my father) at his headquarters at Hansee, where he died. He built the church of St. James at Delhi, in fulfilment of a vow made in battle at a moment of great danger—a fact worth recording because such vows are often made but seldom kept.

Another Indian hero whose name was familiar to me on my father's lips, though I do not know where and how they became acquainted, was Colonel James Gardner, a member of a well-known Irish family. At the age of thirteen family influence had procured him an ensigncy in the King's service—an honour which, of course, carried with it no obligation to serve. With the termination of the American War, and the reduction of the military establishment, James was placed on half-pay before he was fourteen. In 1789 he was on the active list, and in 1794, at the age of twenty-four, he was retired once more as a captain on half-pay. The exact year in which he went out to India cannot be traced, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century we find him in the army of the Mahrattas and in the service of Holkar. He had married a native princess, one of the family of the independent princes of Cambay, who first saw him when he was sent by Holkar on a mission to her father. Of course he did not see her face, but caught a glimpse of dark eyes behind the lattice in the

audience-chamber. Probably the girls of the *zenana* had been allowed to have a peep at the strange sight of a Feringhee soldier, and in any case the electric spark from the two pairs of eyes was enough to light a conflagration in two hearts. Gardner afterwards declared that he made up his mind then and there to wed those eyes or none, and the lady was equally attracted, so that, despite the many difficulties in the way, their marriage was at length allowed. Years after Gardner said, with some pathos, to a lady who was trying to arrange a match for one of his daughters, that he could not advise any Englishman to marry a native lady, and this although he was always a devoted husband and his wife so deeply attached to him that she only survived him a few months.

Among the many tales of Gardner which were household talk to all Anglo-Indian families like our own, was his marvellous escape from the Brahmin Emurt Rao, who had made him prisoner. He was being taken by an armed escort along the banks of the Taptee river, and suddenly wrenching his hands free threw himself over the edge of the bank some fifty feet into the river below. Swimming under water and drifting with the stream, he managed to reach the other bank, and thence made his escape. Even more extraordinary and infinitely more dramatic, however, was his final interview with his master, Holkar. He was of course directing the Mahratta troops against his own countrymen in the war which began in 1803, having entirely thrown in his lot with the natives. He was, however, deemed the best envoy to negotiate with Lord Lake, and was sent on this mission by Holkar. Being delayed for some days, his enemies began to poison Holkar's mind against him, saying that he must be plotting treachery with his own people. Gardner returned at last, quite unsuspecting, to find his master in full *darbar* with all his nobles and chiefs surrounding him. He received Gardner coldly, and when he had heard his news he said: "It is well that you have returned now.

Had you delayed a few hours more I would have razed the *khanats* of your *zenanas*." This threat, involving the throwing down of the walls surrounding the ladies' tents and the violation of their privacy, was the deadliest insult that could be offered. Gardner felt that his position in Holkar's camp was entirely forfeited if he accepted it tamely, and in any case his Irish blood was up. Drawing his sword, he sprang at the Oriental chief on the *daïs*, and would have cut him down had not the nobles and attendants interposed. A moment's wild confusion followed as the cry of treachery was taken up and passed to those outside. In this moment Gardner acted. Thrusting his way out to the spot where his horse was waiting, he flung himself on its back, and with a few seconds' start was able to out-distance pursuit. After many adventures he eventually reached the British outposts disguised as a grass-cutter, and took service with the Company, eventually raising and leading the irregular horse known by his name. The fate of his family, left to the tender mercies of Holkar, was not what one might have expected, and probably James Gardner, who was much attached to his wife, knew his master well enough to be aware that the threat used was not a serious one, though the insult was deadly. As a matter of fact, Holkar did not want to antagonise Gardner still further, or to offend the powerful relatives of the lady, so he sent the princess and her family under escort into the British lines. In his later years the handsome but rather melancholy figure of James Gardner was well known in Delhi and Lucknow, and his son James, who was educated in India and never went to England, was the owner of large estates and celebrated for his hospitality and sportsmanship.

Another source of thrilling stories was Thuggee, which was still going on when my father went to India. I read about the Thugs in Meadows Taylor, and in Slesman's *Reminiscences*, which were to me what Sherlock Holmes is to the modern boy, with this exception—that I

knew what I read to be true for my own father had witnessed such things. The Thugs were members of a sort of murderers' band, with a pseudo-religious basis. They worshipped a goddess, Kali, who demanded human lives as her sacrifice. Her votaries combined business with religion, and sought their victims in the merchants who travelled along the high roads, or the bankers' agents carrying money. Europeans were not attacked, but so wide was their sphere of operations, and so numerous and secret their murderous band, that no native felt safe.

It took the British a long time to realise what Thuggee was; indeed for a considerable time our understanding of the Indians was chiefly limited, as Kaye said, to an apprehension of the facts that they were black, with bare legs, wearing most of their apparel on the tops of their heads. Thuggee was, as a matter of fact, described by Thevenot, the French traveller, in the seventeenth century, who says at that time they used beautiful female decoys, who drew the attention of travellers by acting the part of damsels in distress and noosed their rescuers at the first opportunity. One of the men captured by Sleeman said proudly that he was "a Thug of Royal records," his people having been Thugs for twenty generations. A favourite method was for the Thugs to separate, and one or two would play the part of travellers and "chum up" to other genuine travellers in the towns, suggesting that they should all keep together for safety's sake. There was no end to their diabolical contrivances, and no man felt safe. It would be impossible to reckon the number of the murders, but one man alone was said to have committed seven hundred, and, between 1826 and 1835, 1,400 Thugs were hanged or transported. When our account with India is reckoned up I think the suppression of Thuggee ought to stand on the credit side.

I have been drawn away by these old Indian tales from the story of my boyhood, just as I was drawn away then from my office stool. I stood the office as long as I

could—about two years—and then one day I ran away. I went to Edinburgh and there took a boat—a cattle-boat, I think—from Leith to Hamburg. My sisters had given me a little money, but I had precious little, and I started out to see Europe with only a few shillings in my pocket. I had a companion, another boy from the office, and together we walked and walked and walked. I can hardly remember now where we went, it was all so bewilderingly new. I know we walked through the Black Forest and slept at peasants' huts, and drank milk and ate black bread. I know we were in Prague, in Innsbrück; that we saw the Italian lakes, and then came by Lake Constance and down the Rhine, and found ourselves one day at Antwerp. We carried our worldly goods in knapsacks, and my knowledge of German enabled us to pass as *bürschen*—wandering apprentices on the tramp. We ate with the families at inns or in the peasants' huts, and a few *groschen* paid for our suppers and rough beds. When I read that finest of all novels, "The Cloister and the Hearth," in later life, it carried me back to this *Wanderjahr*—to the joys and perils of the road, the smell of the earth, and the deep shade of forest paths. I had remittances from time to time from my sisters, but no communication from my angry father. At last I heard that Janet, now married and in India, had asked that I should be sent out to her, confident that something could be got for me to do. This was the only bait that could have brought me back within reach of parental authority. Even now, however, I was not to go to Scotland to see my father. I went to London. Here I heard that a police appointment in the North-West Provinces would be open for me. I believe this was the usual refuge where parents sent their black sheep. I know I was a very black sheep indeed, and with others of my kind, and a very scanty outfit, I was shipped off to India. My brother-in-law, Andrew Symington, Felicia's husband, came up to town to see me off and took my passage, and

one or two family friends were kind to me and gave me tips and words of encouragement, but I departed to seek my fortune in India with a very strong impression that I had burnt my boats in Scotland, and that my father would not be reconciled to me until I had proved myself something better than the idle, insubordinate youngster he deemed me. It was sink or swim for me now.

Once I got to India I was the black sheep no longer, which was a very good thing, for I was not the sort of boy to thrive on admonitions. Friends and relations welcomed me; no one seemed to think I ought to have stuck in "that beastly office," and I had a "rattling good time." It was only in later years that I realised how badly I had behaved to kind Uncle Archy, and from a feeling of false shame I never could write to tell him of my regret. I never saw him again, and though he forgave me shortly before his death I know my conduct must have wounded him. I had been regarded as his probable heir, and it was partly this that kept me tongue-tied—I was afraid he would think I wanted his forgiveness for *that!*

I did not return to Scotland for twelve years, in which time I had carved out a career of promise for myself and was on the full tide of prosperity. My father was proud of me, my stepmother became my devoted friend, and the black sheep was washed white!

## CHAPTER V

### I GO TO INDIA

NEEDLESS to say, I went to India by the Cape—the expensive “Overland” was not for youngsters with a plentiful lack of everything except time and health. When we passed my birthplace, off the Cape of Good Hope, we had an even worse storm than that which ushered me into the world. One of our masts was carried away, and I believe we were in some peril. On this voyage I discovered myself to be an excellent sailor, and from that time to this have never been inconvenienced even by the roughest weather and under the most uncomfortable conditions. I spent a good deal of time yarning with the sail-maker, a picturesque figure no longer familiar in ocean travel. He sat in his own little corner in the bows all day long, stitching away with a huge needle at the sails, his hand protected by a leathern shield, and his eyes by a pair of horn spectacles. The sail-maker on a boat plays a special part in old-fashioned sea-stories—is a bit of a character, a philosopher, picking up odd scraps of learning from desultory reading and from his chats with passengers. My friend on the *City of Calcutta* was a good type of his vanishing race. The carpenter was another old salt of the kind we find in Marryat’s tales. I was relieved to find that the discipline maintained by the captain, in the teeth of some little trouble from such sea-lawyers as there were on board, was kept up by moral suasion, and not by loaded pistols and irons, as in my father’s experience.

No special excitement varied our long, dull passage, and I was glad enough when, after a voyage of four



months without a single break or a sight of land, we at last reached Calcutta. Here I was at once with friends, and, as I said before, my sensation of "black sheepdom" vanished before the warmth and kindness of my welcome. My first stay of any length was arranged to give me an idea of life in the *Mofussil*. India was divided then, for its English residents, into Presidency towns, stations and *Mofussil*, the last being "up-country." Each Presidency town was a little metropolis and looked down on the big "stations"—places like Allahabad, Meerut, or Bareilly—while these, in their turn, pitied the benighted denizens of the *Mofussil*. Personally, both then and now, in Africa, Australia, or other continents which my countrymen have colonised, I prefer the "veld" and the "bush" or the *Mofussil* to the imitation English towns which grow up with most of the disadvantages and few of the attractions of city life in Europe. My first acquaintance with the *Mofussil* was, however, made under peculiarly attractive circumstances. I went to stay on a large indigo estate in Behar, indigo being still the source of princely incomes. After my youth and bringing-up in the school of modest economies usual in our Scottish circles, where Riddrie Park, with its graceful and generous but not lavish hospitality, had seemed the height of luxury, I was astonished at the atmosphere in which I found myself. There was a great low bungalow full of rooms, and surrounded by a huge verandah supported on white pillars. Cane chairs and tables lined the verandah, and the rooms, which were all enormous and painted white, had the simplest of furniture and bare floors with mats. But troops of servants waited on one's lightest whim, and guests came in and out as they wished. Horses and carriages were at their disposal, and meals of the most lavish character were served in the dining-hall, at which, it seemed to me, an indefinite number of men appeared and were accepted as guests, even if they only arrived a few minutes before dinner time. I think this easy-going

hospitality, which was carried to an excess at this time in India, was the thing most likely to strike a newcomer from a thrifty Scots home, where an invitation to eat and drink was a serious matter conveyed some days beforehand. The extravagance and waste in an Indian household, especially in one like that I am describing, where there were no ladies, would have appalled my Scottish relations. And with all its charms I am bound to say that the system was a bad one, and that it landed many of those who practised it in debt, while the style of living was far too good and led to over-eating and drinking, and consequently impaired digestions and livers. The plantation itself was not specially attractive, consisting of a vast estate dotted over with little villages, and presenting the appearance of a huge treeless plain, cut only by irrigation ditches.

After this sudden plunge into Oriental luxury—which is not comfort—I went to my cousins the Irvings at Allahabad and saw “station life.” Dr. Irving was then the civil surgeon—he afterwards became Surgeon-General—and his house was a most hospitable one. Here I emerged from the freedom of the non-official *Mofussil* into the genuine Anglo-Indian station atmosphere, with its many social gradations, its sharp division into “civilian and military,” its personal gossip, the ever-present question of “promotion,” and the under-current of pathos in the yearning after home and the anxious waiting for news from loved ones in the old country. A good deal of all this undoubtedly survives to this day, but a great difference exists in the tone of Anglo-Indian society now from the time at which I first made acquaintance with it. This is for the most part due to the far easier intercourse with the old country and the extent to which people move to and fro, coming home continually and being frequently—too frequently, perhaps—visited by streams of friends and acquaintances.

In my father's day people only came home at rare

intervals; some (including a relative of my own) went out and stayed thirty years before visiting the old country. There were no hotels, except at the biggest Presidency towns, and even there they were very bad. The mail came in about once a month until the 'forties, and its arrival was expected breathlessly. For a few days after it came local papers consisted of nothing but extracts from the home Press, and many people made no engagements and accepted no invitations for "mail day," and denied themselves to visitors. Even in my time I remember the enormous importance of the mail, and in business circles the out-going mail-day absorbed most of the energies of the week. All this accentuated the alien character of the Anglo-Indian population in my father's day, but at the same time the difficulty of communication led people to feel far more settled in their Indian life and to get into closer touch with the natives than is now possible. With rare exceptions, however, I do not think that we ever got very near. All writers in the first part of last century notice, what was apparent to me in 1869, that the attitude of the Briton—especially the military Briton—was one of indifference, or even contempt, towards the people and their country. The great majority of Anglo-Indians did not travel about at all; usually they got into their own little corner and moved out of it as little as possible. If moved from station to station—often in very different parts of India and among natives of varying religious races and customs—they took the same habits with them, and did not care to comprehend the differences around them—natives were natives. The civilians who devoted themselves to a study of India did so too much from the literary standpoint. It is a singular fact that a far more consistent attempt has been made to diagnose the psychology of the Burmese, Chinese and Japanese than to understand our own fellow-subjects in India. I know of half-a-dozen really illuminating books on the Burmese, Chinese and Japanese—difficult as they

are—but only one or two monographs on scattered spots in India which can compare with them as glimpses of the actual life of the people. At the same time I know that many of my countrymen, at the period of which I am writing, before India was connected up by railways, lived lives of absolute devotion in lonely little Indian stations, without hope of pecuniary reward, and created all over India that high estimate of British justice and integrity which is our real stronghold to-day.

One met such men chiefly in the *Mofussil*. They were not much attracted by society in the Presidency towns or big stations. Here—especially in the former—there were seasons of feverish gaiety and brilliance, balls, suppers, dinner parties, often prolonged into the comparatively cool hours of the night which are so badly needed to repair the ravages of an Indian day. Stocqueler, who (as I have said) was a friend of my father's, gives a description of Anglo-Indian society in his day—twenty years before I went out—which seemed to my young eyes and ears to be not inapt in my time. He speaks of the men and women as having, for the most part, left home early, and lived in a narrow circle ever since. “Having ceased to see and know the *best* of everything in sciences, arts, and the minor elegancies of life, they come to have an incompetent standard by which they estimate things. Then there is the monotony. Dine where you will you are sure to meet the same people or the same description of people, so that your faculties have no new exercise, and thus become either so rusted or stiffened or worn . . . that they are past all renewing by the time they come into collision with better exercised minds. The intending adventurer, therefore, may lay to his account in meeting with but second-rate society in regard to manners, customs and even intellect (save in respect to local affairs) on his arrival in India. But there is this comfort in store for him, namely, that he will inevitably get used to it, and, without greater exertion than is usually employed, he will

find his English mind subsiding to the Anglo-Indian level; and he will, like his expatriated countrymen, deem that the best which is the best he knows."

For myself, straight from that atmosphere of keen thinking and criticism common in Scots households, and from the wider culture of Riddrie Park and its master, I was not unobservant of the narrow intellectual circle of my new friends and acquaintances. There was no political crisis to be discussed, no new novel or biography, no eloquent preacher or novelty of any kind. We talked shop, shop, shop! Even the comparative breadth of a commercial class, with its ramifying interests, was absent in our up-country station, where all were "officials," military or civilian. Even the doctor and the parson were in "the service" and talked the same kind of "station shop" in which "promotion" was the Alpha and Omega. A witty lady, writing of civilian society at a rather earlier date, says that everyone conjugated the verb "to collect," thus: I am a collector, you are a collector, he should be a collector, they will be collectors, etc., *ad infinitum*. Of course, there were clever and cultured people in India—the exception which proved the rule; but we did not have many of them in our stations!

At Meerut I joined my sister Janet and her husband, Captain Court, and here I came to a critical point in my career, as I had to decide what to do. The police appointment which was my ostensible goal did not seem good enough to my sister, who had greater ambitions for me, so it was decided I should go to Roorkee and try for an appointment in the Public Works Department. Roorkee is a Government college, founded through the efforts of a Royal Engineer officer Thomasson, who thought a training college for Anglo-Indian boys would provide a valuable nucleus for the many public works then being undertaken in India, and would also be a relief for the men who could not afford to send all their boys home. Here, too, Indians were trained as surveyors, but in my time the engineering

branch was entirely reserved for Anglo-Indians. Among my classmates were several men who have since risen to some distinction in the engineering world, especially Sir W. Willcocks, so well known for his irrigation work in Egypt. With the exception of Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Elliott, the professor of mathematics, all our teachers were Royal Engineers, and the principal was Colonel Medley, R.E. Elliott was extremely popular, and was a delightful companion—gentle, cultivated and thoughtful. He afterwards became head of the Meteorological Department in India and brought that service to a very high pitch of efficiency. All the officers treated us young fellows with great kindness and *camaraderie*, joined in our games, and took great interest in our training. Incidentally I may mention that the first gymkhana held in India or anywhere else (under that name) took place at Roorkee in 1860. The word is a hybrid of some kind, but even the erudition of Sir Henry Yule was baffled by it.

Altogether, the two years I spent at Roorkee were extremely pleasant as well as profitable. We did a great deal of practical and field work, at which I was always better than at books. I never was any good at examinations and rejoice that I did not have to compete in the present era, when the examiners' main idea seems to be to find out what the wretched candidate does not know—not what he does! I should have been ploughed hopelessly again and again. If I ever have a nightmare it usually takes this form—that I have to go in for an examination, and I suffer agony at the absolute blankness of my mind on every subject! As it was, however, after a little reading with a clergyman at Mussourie I was able to pass into Roorkee, and at the end of two years I passed out creditably and got a post as assistant engineer in Burma, my first station being Tenasserim. The education at Roorkee was practically free, and living was very cheap. We all lived in small bungalows, two in each, and messed together. My sister helped me with the necessary expenses,

but I think few men got their professional education cheaper than I did. The one thing in which I found myself at a disadvantage was games, for we had played no games at Neuwied. Therefore I could not compete on even terms with my comrades in cricket and football, and as I hated doing anything badly I did not join in these games more than I could help. I had never learnt to dance either, and at a later date I found this a social disadvantage but was too stiff and proud to remedy the deficiency. I believe I was extremely sensitive, self-conscious, and rather shy; at any rate I was never a favourite in society and did not care for it.

From Roorkee I paid visits to Delhi and Agra, and at the former was entertained by Major de Kantzow, of Kantzow's Horse, who lived by himself in the city. He was one of the survivors of the Mutiny, and a story was told of him that, being taken prisoner and led out to be shot, he asked for time to finish his cheroot, and so impressed his captors with his fearlessness that they gave him his life.

I was, however, fond of sport, and whenever we had a day to spare went off shooting wild fowl on the upper reaches of the Ganges, and peacock and deer in the dense forests at the foot of the Himalayas. In this neighbourhood there were villages with temples and shrines dedicated to the goddess who protects monkeys, and the surrounding groves were full of her chattering votaries, who were bold with their own immunity and used to throw down cocoanuts on our heads. On one occasion one of our party, ignorant of their sacred character, shot one of these monkeys, and brought the village like a swarm of locusts round us. For my part, I could never shoot a monkey however annoying it might be—it is too human in its death agony. I went out tiger shooting once or twice, but of course it was too expensive an amusement for us youngsters as a rule. My principal recollection of it at this period is the extensive and elaborate organization

of the campaign against one animal. Armies of beaters, corps of *shikaris*, and herds of elephants were marched forth, and my part, as it seemed to me, was merely to sit in the fork of a very uncomfortable tree and wonder what on earth I should do if the great man-eater, then crashing about in the jungle not far off, should actually appear and make for me. I was not sure I could fire without falling off my perch, and I was not genuinely sorry that the tiger avoided me. I feel that this "tiger story" is far from orthodox, but it has at least the merit of truthfulness.

I wonder if the spread of British ideas of comfort has altered the bachelor bungalow of my early days in India. It was a type which varied very little—long before one entered one knew what it would be like. The bungalow usually had two rooms, side by side, and a verandah, front and back. The sides of the house were protected by the sloping roof, and the wide verandah stood open to the breeze. The back verandah was walled in on either side with matting, and in one corner was the bath-room, where we ladled the water over ourselves with earthen pots (*chutties*) standing on the floor, from which the water drained away. In the opposite corner was the pantry, but all cooking was done in a cook-house, from which a covered way ran to the bungalow. The front verandah contained, besides the inevitable long chair, a "horse" on which saddles and harness were accommodated. The sitting-room had a camp table, half-a-dozen Bareilly chairs, two oil lamps hung on the walls, two *tepoys* (small tables), a cotton carpet (in white and purple) and a shelf with half-a-dozen books, civilian or military according to the profession of the owner. The decorations of this apartment usually betrayed sporting tastes, for the youngster who took up life in the *Mofussil* had no other recreation. Accordingly there would be rusty hog-spears in one corner, and a badly cleaned fowling piece in another, a pair of *moogdahs* (Indian clubs) on the floor,



and a selection of skulls, tusks and tigers' claws disposed on the walls. The bedroom contained little but the *charpoy*, a wooden frame with broad tape stretched over it and tightened at the sides with rope. A fine grass mat, sheet, pillows, and a light rug or silk *rezai* were the ordinary bachelor's bedding. But in luxurious bungalows like one I first visited the pillows were many, and each had its office. The *sirhana* went under one's head, the *pyrhana* was a round bolster for knees and feet, the *gaolukiya* tucked itself between one's shoulderblades, and there were other *tukunas* (small cushions) which supported one's frame in various directions. I met the second of these, the *sirhana*, again in the Dutch East Indies, where the round fat bolster is suggestively called a "Dutch wife." The literature one looked for in our bachelor's bungalow was not extensive or varied. One thing we should always find—the "Army List" or "Civil List" for the year of our friend's arrival in India, marked and corrected up to date.

In the hot weather the *charpoy* was taken out into the compound and placed under little tents with the sides raised. The heat was so intense that, even with air all round, it was often impossible to sleep, and one kept on jumping up under the impression that a fire had been lighted under the *charpoy*. Sometimes the wild beasts of the forest paid us a visit, and there was a story about a man who woke up to see a great lean, yellow cat prowling round and round his compound. He waited for the propitious moment, and with one bound reached the door of his bungalow and banged it in the face of the tiger—not a nice adventure for a hot night!

During some of my holidays I joined my sister and brother-in-law in several camping expeditions. He was, I think, detailed for political work, and travelled about visiting some of the native States. The pageant of Indian life unfolded itself before me in these journeys, which were made with Oriental leisureliness and luxury. We

had a regular cavalcade of camp-followers, and our tents, with furniture, books, carpets and baths, were taken on ahead of us and were ready when we arrived, riding quietly along in the cool of the morning. Then we camped, bathed, and had *hasri*, after which during the long day we watched the peasant life of the village, and Captain Court held interminable colloquies with headmen, seated under huge banyan trees. His writer, a *babu*, squatted at his feet busily taking notes, and at other times was seen juggling with large portfolios and sheets of paper which were the symbols of his office and importance. My own youthful laziness in this life of *dolce far niente* was tempered by the appearance, at stated intervals, of the grey-bearded old *munshi* who accompanied us on all our travels, and who presented himself before me with polite bows but an inexorable determination that I should read with him. My brother-in-law, an admirable linguist himself, would not allow any shirking. He was in many ways a brilliant personage, a fine billiard and racquet player, a good shot and crack rider. He survived my sister, but both are long since dead.

The debt of gratitude I owed to my sister Janet at this period can never be repaid. She took me, a raw, rebellious cub, and gave me the chance of my life. When I left her to go to Burma she asked two favours of me—not as pledges but as resolves: first that I would not gamble, and second that I would not get into debt. Her experience had shown her that these were the greatest pitfalls for young fellows like myself. She was of a proud and independent spirit and inculcated the same qualities in me. Whatever success has come to me in life I owe to her intervention at a critical point in my career, and to her wise, gentle influence. *Requiescat in pace!*

## CHAPTER VI

### IN LOWER BURMA

THE first thing that struck me about Burma was its unlikeness to India. I was much pleased with the novelty, for there was an amount of convention in Anglo-Indian life which was not congenial to me. To begin with, the physical features—a long coast-line, embracing the immense delta of a great network of rivers and creeks covered by forest of various kinds—were a contrast to the mountains and plains from which I had come, and the climatic change from dryness to extreme humidity was proportionate. At this time we occupied a long narrow strip of coast line—Arakan, Martaban and Tenasserim, acquired in 1824—26, and Pegu in 1852—53. Behind this strip lay an almost unknown land, Upper Burma to the north and north-west and Siam to the east. Burma, once a great empire stretching from Dacca to the Gulf of Siam, was now an inland State, whose only outlet lay through foreign territory and whose authority throughout its borderlands was fast dwindling. The people were very different to the Indians. Instead of the Bengalee—too often a cringing sycophant in those days—I met the frank and cheery Burmans, who were and are the most democratic of people and have the easiest and yet most courteous manners in the world. Here was no religious difference—no fanatical Mussulman nor fatalist Hindoo, but the childlike Buddhism of the Burmese, with its ritual of flowers, its carved and gilded pagodas and *kyounges*, and its doctrine of charity and good works. Here were no feudal castles or estates or remnants of an aristocracy. Here, moreover, one was freed from that incubus of India,

the hosts of more or less inefficient and lazy servants, and from a moderate bachelor household of ten to fifteen men I descended to about three. The cooking, I must confess, and the service generally, were extremely indifferent, for very few Burmese had been trained, and the best cooks were Arakanese, called Mugs, who were in great demand even in Calcutta, so that they were very scarce and expensive. The Madrased cook was found only in the coast towns. The houses were another novelty to me, being always raised on piles with an open space beneath, instead of lying on the ground like an Indian bungalow. Here I first made acquaintance with the bamboo, one of the indispensables of life in all Malayan countries. The bamboo builds houses, provides water pipes, cooking pots, masts of boats, ladders, vats, oil cans, water butts, boxes for clothes, musical instruments, bridges—every conceivable thing! Yule called it the “staff of life” in Indo-China. What pleased me most in Burma was that one got out of the official rut and met in society the big merchants and their employees, so that “station talk” was not so universal and unending.

When my father heard I was going to Burma he sent me letters of introduction from his old friend Sir Arthur Phayre, who had a distinguished career as Chief Commissioner of Burma. Phayre was godfather to my youngest brother and a great friend of the family. As mentioned, my father paid a flying visit to Burma at one time—a fact which I only discovered at this very time, when my father wrote me to be sure and visit certain places which he remembered. The letters so kindly sent by Sir Arthur were not of much service to me, for in the East, as elsewhere, official memory is short, and it is a case of *Le roi est mort—vive le roi*. Nevertheless, I hope I profited indirectly by my slight connection with a man whose character had won for him the affection and respect of Europeans and Burmans alike. The latter especially, who as a rule were not by any means conciliated by the manners which the

Anglo-Indian *sahibs* affected towards "natives," were charmed with Sir Arthur's sympathy and courtesy. He devoted a great deal of study to the Burmese dialects and to *Pali*, the classic form in which the Buddhist religious works are written. Bishop Bigandet, the head of the Roman Catholic missions in Burma, was another scholar of the same calibre, and was still there when I went out—a charming old man and a picturesque figure. He and Phayre dug up the archives of the Burmese and reconstructed their history—no light task, as anyone will realise who has delved into Indo-Chinese history with its tangled blend of truth and fable and its centuries of genealogies. Phayre was generally regarded by his contemporaries as a saint, but on occasions he had a sense of humour not always found in saints. A friend once found him about noon entertaining a party of Burmese who had called in the early morning and prolonged their visit beyond endurance. "Wonderful staying powers," murmured Sir Arthur in English in the interval between two polite sentences.

There is a story of Bishop Bigandet over which we all roared when it was first told, and which is, I believe, perfectly true. There was a lady living in a somewhat isolated "station" who was noted for the paucity of her ideas, and the limit of her conversational powers was usually reached in three stages. The first question she asked all newcomers was "How long have you been in Burma?" The second, "Are you married?" The third, "Have you any children?" Bishop Bigandet, who was perhaps the best known man in Burma, was a little surprised when she fired off the first at him. "Fifty years!" he replied shortly. At the second he nearly bounced off his chair. "A Roman Catholic bishop does not marry, madam." Whether the poor lady had not heard, or whether she got flurried I do not know, but she went on to the third item of her catechism. "And have you any children?" Bigandet fled out of the house, thinking she was mad, and

was seen walking up and down in a rage, banging his stick on the ground and declaring that it would be better to break stones on the road than to be married to a fool!

Missionaries had been for some time at work in Burma, especially among the heathen Karens, who made willing converts. At the time of the pacification of Upper Burma the Karens actually fought in defence of their pastors. They were not like the "rice converts" of other regions, but built their own schools and churches and supported them very largely from their own resources. One of the best known figures in Rangoon at this period was the Rev. Dr. Marks, at the S.P.G. school, through which many thousands of young Burmans passed, including several princes. Dr. Marks was the liveliest of talkers and *raconteurs*, and retains this power to the present day, though now well over seventy. He showed me the other day his school register. No. 27 was Theebaw, third prince, son of Mindon Min; No. 28 was Mariam, a Portuguese half-caste boy. Truly the Burmese are a democratic people! Dr. Marks did not consider Theebaw a bad character, but he was weak and entirely under the control of the Supaya Lat, his wife. She was described by her own mother as having been since birth "the wickedest creature on earth." On one occasion two Europeans were paying a visit to the palace of Mindon Min, and one drew the attention of the other to the charming little girl who was playing about. "Look at her tiger eyes!" he said. This was Supaya Lat.

Clifford Lloyd was another interesting figure. He entered the Burmese police at eighteen, and was now assistant commissioner. He afterwards went home and was resident magistrate in Ireland for a considerable time, where he earned the hatred of the Nationalist party by his vigorous enforcement of the law. He always maintained that the Burmese and the Irish alike were easily governed as long as a just and consistent policy was followed,

but that the alternate "kiss and kick" treatment was fatal in either country. He certainly did not give the impression of being the hard-hearted tyrant his Irish enemies represented him to be, as he had a gentle and engaging manner, and was usually sympathetic and anxious to understand the people. His after career in Egypt and elsewhere demonstrated his ability, and I shall have occasion to recall his quarrel with Pope Hennessy later on.

Rangoon is not a picturesque place as one approaches it by the river, as the banks are merely above high water, and it is moreover a modern city, founded in 1755, before which Dalla on the opposite bank was the port. The great attraction of Rangoon is, of course, the wonderful Shwe Dagon pagoda, with its beautiful golden fane, which has attracted pious pilgrims from all parts of Burma and from other countries—even China and Japan—for two thousand years, according to Burmese tradition, and still continues to attract them.

When I first knew Rangoon it was a primitive place with unpretentious Government house and secretariat, and a few official buildings. In the earlier days of our occupation this town, lying on the mud flats at the mouth of the Irrawaddy, was so unhealthy that its abandonment was contemplated, just as was that of Hong Kong. In both places science has triumphed, and a wonderfully clean bill of health is now usual. In '71 Rangoon was not particularly salubrious, but the European colony managed to get along with frequent visits to healthier climes. An evening trip on one of the river tug-boats was supposed to brace one up in the hot weather. The great disadvantage was the lack of any hill-station, and to this day there is no health resort, even in Upper Burma, worthy to be classed with Indian hill-stations like Simla, Naini Tal, Mussourie, or even Ooty (Ootacamund). For this reason it was necessary to go either home or to India for a change, the latter alternative being seldom chosen. Men preferred to

save up and go home, the result being, very often, that the needed change was put off too long. Of the men who were my contemporaries in various Government departments in 1871 many had dropped out by '89, when I left Burma, and practically none are now alive. Of course we did not have the luxuries so essential in sickness, and food was generally poor, even in Rangoon, much more so up country, where we lived on the tinned foods of the period—nothing like so good as what is now sold. During this part of my life I acquired a dislike which almost amounts to loathing for tinned food, and though I have frequently since then been obliged to use it on journeys and in up-country stations, yet I always prefer to eat native food, however rough. I cannot even face a sardine with complacency!

At the time of which I write milk was frequently unprocurable in Burma, for to milk cows is against Burmese native practice, and ice was an unheard-of luxury except at Rangoon and one or two of the larger stations. In India we took ice-machines, even when camping, but then we had the necessary labour to work them. In Burma we had no *punkahs*. It was fortunate the nights were cool, for where should we have found *punkah-wallahs*? The Burmese had not the incentive of grinding poverty to drive them, like Indians, into service, and moreover they dislike the method and discipline essential in such work. The result of all this was to strip life of its Indian superfluities, and to teach one the most salutary of all lessons—how to do without.

During this period I had frequent changes of post from east to west, and later on to what was then independent Burma, but my first station was at Moulmein, a beautifully-situated little modern town on the bank of the Salween. The people here are the Talaings, or Mon (who had driven out the original inhabitants)—a very attractive and pleasant people as far as manner goes. There are of course several races in Burma, and when we first took over



the country they spoke different dialects, and even languages, which, however, are disappearing. Tradition speaks of a Shan kingdom in the north of Burma, and there was certainly one at Tali, in Yunnan, conquered by Kublai Khan, in 1253, who disrupted the then great Shan power. A large proportion of the population of Southern China is undoubtedly Shan—an unsatisfactory generic term, but there is no better. As I shall often have to mention the Shans, with whom I first made acquaintance in Burma but afterwards saw in Indo-China and Southern China, I may say here that with wide variations they present certain differences which distinguish them from the Chinese or Tartars. Some of the Shans have fair skins and grey eyes, but otherwise resemble the Burmese and Siamese in many respects except in the nose, which is more aquiline.

My first real acquaintance with the Burmese came through my friend Theo Fforde, a police officer whom I met at Moulmein, and with whom I became great chums. He was deeply interested in the people and spoke their language very well. He had the gift of intuition and sympathy so frequently found in Irishmen and so often lacking in the stiffer Englishmen. He had, moreover, the Irish buoyancy and elasticity of spirit and keen sense of humour—qualities which find close parallels in the Burmese themselves. The Burmese are indeed the Irish of the East. Besides the humour, childlike love of fun, and “artistic temperament,” they are at once indolent and inquisitive, courteous and sociable, yet free in their manner and never really familiar. They are free-handed in the true Irish manner, being ready to share their own—or anyone else’s—last crust. Both Burmese and Irish are inclined to be boastful, and the former when in office has the arrogance of a “democrat” all the world over. The influence of the priests offers another strong analogy, which is strikingly carried out in the educational system and in the manner in which a large proportion of the poorer classes are absorbed into the Church. Of course

there are many points of difference, too. For one thing, the Burmese are extremely temperate. Then the Irishman is no true democrat, society for him preserving the fundamental class distinction between gentry and workers, while in Burma there was only one aristocrat—the king—and the rest of the country stood on an equality and rose or fell by individual luck or ability. This is not, of course, theoretical democracy, but it is a step nearer to it than many modern states, and, like the Chinese, the Burmese are really democratic in their social system.

This is no place for a dissection of Burmese character, about which many people have written well and sympathetically, but I must record two of the impressions which I received most forcibly because of the contrast with India which they presented. First, the position of the Burmese woman, with her freedom, energy, and independence—no woman in the world, I believe, has a better legal and social status, notwithstanding the low standard of female education; and second, the accessibility of the people. With my friend Fforde, and later by myself, I could go into a village or hamlet and sit down to eat rice with the family, who were in no wise disconcerted by our presence. Here I first made acquaintance with *letpet*, or “pickled tea,” and also with *ngapee*—the *balachoung* of the Malays—a condiment made of prawns, sardines, and other small fish allowed to ferment in a heap and then mashed up with salt. It is an acquired taste, as is the *durian*, the fruit called appropriately *stanker* by the Dutch. The Venetian traveller, Gasparo Balbi (1583) was not fond of *balachoung*, and said he would “rather smell a dead dog, to say nothing of eating it.” Yet the Indo-Chinese, who find *balachoung* a delicacy, cannot bear the smell of cheese. *Autres pays autres mœurs*. Everywhere in Burma one was met with courtesy, frankness and hospitality. I have recently read a description of travels in Western China and Upper Burma by Mr. Johnstone, of Wei-hai-wei, who says that he had made solitary journeys, which landed

him in the most unexpected manner in villages where white people were, to say the least, a novelty, but was never subjected to discourtesy or curiosity, and received the most graceful hospitality for which his hosts declined payment. This was exactly my own experience in these early days in Lower Burma—as it has been elsewhere in the Far East—whenever I made expeditions away from the crowded coast ports where the Europeans mostly lived, and where the true Burman was hardly to be seen. My work as an assistant-engineer chiefly consisted at first in surveying for roads, and consequently often took me into regions where the white man had not yet made his appearance. I enjoyed the independence and freedom of the life, liked my work, and got much attached to the Burmese, as indeed are all who have spent any time among those most attractive people. Of course their indolence was irritating at times, especially when one was trying to get labour, and I remember one bit of work—embanking or reclamation—in which I was obliged to call in the women and children of the neighbouring villages and pay every one myself at the end of each day's labour. Seated at a table under a tree, I doled out coppers from a big bag, a lengthy, tedious proceeding, but effective. The attraction to the villagers was twofold. First, they did not have to take it on trust that six days' labour would be recompensed altogether; second, the *mengyee* himself handed out the daily earning without such deductions as would certainly have been made by the headman. In this way they grew accustomed to the idea of working for us, and later on the contract system became possible.

I often wonder whether the great network of law and system which we have gradually spread over Burma, making it into little more than another Indian province, has sufficient compensations for what it has destroyed. Burma, I am told, is a dull and uniform country nowadays; and, if we have established order, we have introduced spirits and undermined their religious beliefs.

Burma used to enjoy a very large amount of local authority under the village headmen, who had considerable power both for good and evil, and used it both ways; and under their own rulers the play and the boat race, and many other amusements, were encouraged. Whatever the disadvantages of the system, it was a growth of the soil and suited the Burmese temperament in many ways. We have replaced it by a bureaucracy; and the headman, gradually shorn of his prerogatives, is replaced by the official and the "municipality." The official is, of course, both more efficient and more upright than the headman; but he is an official and an alien. Only the other day—after twenty years' absence—I had a letter from the old headman of a village in my one-time district. He had evidently got some young friend to write it for him in English. "Excellency," he said, "since your honour went this poor man has no protector, and I can get no promotion from the Government; but if your honour will say the word I shall be made much higher, for now I am of no consequence and get no more salary." I have no doubt he is a lazy and extortionate old boy, or would be if he got the chance; but as the innocent victim of a higher civilisation he has my sympathy. Burmese village life has lost much of its zest and flavour with the change, and the seriousness of our administration—sports are not encouraged and subsidised, and one Chief Commissioner actually forbade officials to take part in boat races—has taken the colour out of national life, while vastly increasing the revenue and giving security to life and property. It is the old story—the practical efficiency of the West supersedes the fantastic *insouciance* of the East, and we say the people must be happier because they are better off and better governed. But we forget that the ideal of happiness varies, and that the Oriental view of it is less materialistic than ours. We found the Burmese, as we thought, a child loving to wreath himself in flowers, to go off for long boating picnics and to take part in

elaborate displays. His love of sheer beauty, his enjoyment of living for its own sake, his apparent lack of ambition, we condemned as unworthy of serious citizens. We have done our best to teach him better, and he is a docile pupil. Now he is caught in the fly-wheel of our great industrial civilisation. He is "better off," but is he happier?

My work took me to different sections of the country, from the flat plains at the mouth of the Irrawaddy to the mountainous districts of Arakan and Tenasserim. I particularly remember one station because of the Gilbertian nature of social relations there. We were a very limited community—a deputy-commissioner and his wife, a police officer and his wife, and myself, a young assistant-engineer. Unhappily the two ladies had quarrelled over a cow belonging to one which had strolled into the compound of the other. The original offence does not seem very great, but the two were not on speaking terms and the feud had extended to the husbands. I was the connecting link and had to exercise considerable tact in order to keep on good terms with both. If I went to tiffin with one, I called later in the day on the other; and the slightest courtesy had to be made in duplicate. A travelling parson who sometimes visited us was equally on thorns during his visit, and dare not be seen walking with either lady! Ludicrous as it may seem, this situation lasted for the better part of the time I was there—nearly a year. After such an experience I quite enjoyed bachelor stations, where I was, more than once, the lord of all I surveyed, and sometimes did not see a white face for months. I did all sorts of work: surveying, roads, embankments, canals, and, lastly, was employed on the first railway in Burma, from Rangoon to Prome. Most of the work was fairly easy and primitive, and the executive and chief engineers were competent men who were brought in from outside, or else R.E. officers—not Cooper's Hill men, whose day came later.

We were really at the beginning of things in Burma, for even roads did not exist in many parts, and to this day Arakan is practically roadless. It is thirty-seven years since I surveyed a road from Martaban (opposite Moulmein) towards Rangoon, and only this year has a railway been opened to connect these two principal seaport towns of Burma.

Our ordinary life in the country away from Rangoon and the small stations during the dry season was uneventful enough, but we had a great deal of riding and some shooting, and now and then we managed to create some diversion to lighten the tedium of our existence. We read the *Rangoon Gazette* and the *Pioneer*, and smoked Burma cigars (which are only rolled in Burma) all day long. On one occasion I remember four of us were camped in a village—a police-officer, a forest officer, myself as engineer, and another belonging to some other department. This gentleman, X., was very vain, fancied himself a great lady-killer, and had persuaded himself that the young Burmese ladies were easily enamoured of the *thaken*—the white gentleman—an illusion which I (and I believe the others) did not altogether share. He irritated us by pressing his view, until I made up my mind to play him a trick which I thought might teach him a lesson. It so happened that a young lad in my service, who had just re-joined me after being away on leave, was clever, mischievous, extremely good-looking, rather slight in figure, and with an effeminate cast of features. It occurred to me that this youth, with a little drilling in behaviour, could be passed off as a newly-arrived niece of the *thugye* (the village headman) and that, if the attention of our impressionable friend were drawn to the fact that the village could now boast of a new belle, interesting developments might be looked for. It must be explained here that in Burma it is *en règle* to make a call on a family and thus secure the acquaintance of a young lady, and that there is a regular “courting time”—the “time for

young men to go about" is the term—which is about 9 p.m. At this hour the young lady or ladies of the house, nicely dressed, flowers in hair, cosmetic powder on face, cheroots and betel at hand, are ready for callers. Flirting and conversation (subdued, I need hardly say) are indulged in. The parents are supposed to be asleep—a convenient fiction, for the Burmese mother has a watchful eye—and the young people have a good time, almost like as in America. The old *thugyee* and his wife enjoyed the comedy, and undertook to drill the "niece." Well, our friend took the bait, and one day he announced to us that there was a charming girl at the *thugyee's*. "You mean the old man's niece," one of us replied; "just come back from Namlayboo—very pretty girl—daughter of the *myook* (a minor official) of that place."

That evening X. was at the *thugyee's* at "courting time," and he was absent from our camp for the next few evenings but wore a very conquering air. Suddenly the "niece" vanished, "gone back to her father's at Namlayboo," leaving X. disconsolate but inclined to be boastful of his conquest, and consulting us seriously as to the possibility of opening a correspondence. Some weeks later, when he rode up to the *zyat* (resthouse) where I was camped, he suddenly came upon the "*thugyee's* niece" waiting at my table! X. was not quite so self-confident in future, and in later days he never alluded to one little love affair of his.

On one occasion I nearly lost my life on the Sittang River in the great "bore" which rushes up the funnel-like channel at a speed of twenty miles an hour. Three waves, some ten feet in height, succeed each other, and any boats left lying in the side creeks are carried on with a rush and often capsized. A whole wing of a Sepoy regiment was once caught and drowned by the "bore." Warning is usually given, and many Burmans know by the atmospheric disturbance when to expect it, and immediately set to work to pull their boats up into a place of

safety. We had got the warning, but tried to push on to the place where we wanted to land and were within an ace of being caught by the wall of water.

River life in Burma, as in all Malay countries, is one of the most characteristic features. The people are almost amphibious, and from the time they are able to walk the children may be seen tumbling about in the streams in Nature's garb, their little brown bodies shining with water and their black heads as sleek as seals. Older girls and boys also disport themselves freely and without *gêne*, perhaps with a *sarong* tucked under their armpits, perhaps with even less. Deeper streams are covered with canoes, which glide out from the banks taking perhaps a whole family out for an evening's pleasure. Great rafts of teak and bamboo float slowly along or boats with high carved steering chairs and graceful prows. From each and all comes the lap-lap of the paddle and the tinkle of voices, light and merry, perhaps the note of a musical instrument or a crooning snatch of song. The rich, bright colours are reflected in the water; deep shades fall from the banks. Near by on a hill can be discerned the gleam of a white pagoda with heavy carved roof, or the seven-storied spires of a *kyoung*, gleaming with tarnished gilding. Along the road to the ford comes a procession of round-limbed, merry girls, in rainbow-tinted garments whose brightness is dimmed in the rapidly waning light. On their heads are the red clay water jars, and they pause to chatter and gossip musically before trotting home to their bamboo villages. A different note is struck by the yellow-robed monks, pacing solemnly along with bent head and alms-bowl in hand to their big barrack-like monastery on a neighbouring height. The colouring of such a picture is too deep, rich, and subtle to be conveyed in words. Such harmonies of brown, purple, orange and indigo are to be seen nowhere else, save perhaps in Java where aniline dyes have not yet ousted the native product.

To the period of my wanderings as an assistant-engineer



belongs my great snake story. I must mention that I have a horror of snakes, and have had one or two little adventures with them. In Burma death from snake-bite was by no means unusual. I arrived one evening at a village and was accommodated in the house of the headman, for *dak* bungalows had not yet been imported from India. My bedding was spread on the matted floor, and I was soon asleep. I awakened with a sudden and horrible sensation. Something was creeping slowly up my leg under the blanket. From the way it coiled itself slowly along my thigh I knew it to be a snake, and lay motionless, with cold sweat standing out on my forehead. I made up my mind that when it reached my body, where it would probably coil up for the warmth, I would spring up suddenly in the hope of throwing it off. The moment came—I sprang to my feet and hurled my blankets from me with a frightful yell. Something else was hurled too, and a loud and pitiful “miaou” came from the heap of blankets in the corner of the room, while a forlorn-looking kitten emerged, and, arching its back, remonstrated with me for my unreasonable conduct. The extraordinary thing is that many months afterwards, when this incident had been almost forgotten, I passed the village again, stopped in the same house, and had the same visitor who woke me up with an exactly similar sensation. I chucked the kitten out again, rather roughly, and explained to her that even on a cold night I liked my bed to myself, so she spat at me and said “Damn” several times, and then went away.

It was during my second stay at Rangoon, when I was on the railway already mentioned, that I made my entrance into literature, or rather journalism, with a series of would-be satirical sketches called “Paddyville Papers,” which I contributed to the *Rangoon Gazette*. A friend of mine was its editor and kept the secret of the authorship, which was just as well for me, since I castigated local society and foibles with considerable freedom. Paddyville was, of course, Rangoon, from the

paddy or rice fields (Malay : *padi* = rice) with which that town was surrounded. There was much discussion in the club and drawing-rooms over this youthful effort of mine, and I kept my counsel discreetly and smiled at the flutter in the dovecot. I certainly enjoyed myself very much when, at a dinner-table, I heard my humble efforts attributed to the chief judge, because he was said to be the only man sufficiently talented to write them ! I wagged my head and quite agreed, but this was my first and last attempt at social satire, and from what I recollect of them I do not think the Paddyville Papers showed any special talent in that line. Such small societies as ours in Burma always afford good material for caricature, and any personal peculiarities are seized on in a country where topics are few. My own nickname was "Blazes." We really had some quaint and original people, however, and it is only the possibility that some may still be alive that restrains me from describing them. The hero of the following, however, is beyond the reach of ridicule. He was one of the first military-civilians in Burma—needless to say before my time. When going out he had C.B. painted on all his trunks and boxes. "We didn't know you were a C.B., old man !" said his friends. But the C.B. stood for "Commissioner, Burma." Another worthy was once attending some function, and a friend asked why his breast was adorned with a Mutiny medal. "Sad business !" he replied, "Dear friend of mine—made me promise always to wear it."

I might have stayed in Burma and risen from grade to grade till I retired on a pension as superintending engineer or was tucked away underground like so many of my contemporaries, but a curious chance got me out of my rut. In 1879 it was decided to send a mission to Siam in connection with certain questions as to the forests lying between Burma and the Shan State of Zimmay. Colonel Street was at the head of this mission, and desired to

have with him as secretary a civilian with some knowledge of surveying who could make a route map as they marched. There was some competition for this post, which in the ordinary way would have been filled by the chief from his own friends or acquaintances. As a matter of fact, he had a near relation who wanted it and was qualified. Luckily for me, he happened to hold extreme views on nepotism, and declined to nominate or select anyone, much less to take one of his own relations. He requested the head of the Public Works Department to select someone, and to my delight and surprise I was the fortunate individual. Being entirely without family influence myself I owed my chance in life to the unusual fairmindedness of a stranger.

## CHAPTER VII

### A MISSION TO SIAM

WE left for Siam and Zimmay in 1879, intending to have an interview with the King of Siam at Bangkok, and then proceed up the Ménam river to the Shan State of Zimmay, but eventually we returned to Moulmein, ascended the Salween, and marched across the mountain range which divides Burma and Siam. This journey took us first to Singapore, where Sir Cecil Clementi Smith was Acting-Governor, and then to the river-city of Bangkok, the Venice of the East, which was still little known and seldom visited by Europeans.

The present King Chulalongkorn was on the throne, where he succeeded his father in 1868. He had been partially educated by an English lady, Mrs. Leonowens, whose experiences as the only European at the Siamese Court make most interesting reading. Chulalongkorn's father was an extraordinary character. He had an enormous harem and thousands of women slaves, and this great community of helpless women literally held their existence at his lightest wish, and were exalted, cast into prison, or executed at his whim. Mrs. Leonowens did her best to help and teach these poor creatures, and to exert a wholesome influence on her royal pupils. Chulalongkorn was much attached to her, but was taken from her teaching at an early age to enter a monastery—part of the usual training of Siamese youths. His father was a diligent student of English and thought himself a great hand at composition. On one occasion he sent for the English consul in the middle of the night, and that unfortunate official, fearing some disaster, was dragged

hastily to the palace only to find the royal author in the throes of composition and desirous of some further light on the respective meanings of the words "soul" and "spirit."

The impression created on us by Bangkok was by no means favourable. On the surface there was a good deal of gaiety, but the evidences of a grinding slavery were as palpable as the official corruption and procrastination which obstructed our negotiations. During a later visit, I was able to inquire more fully into the social conditions, and my impression was confirmed. About nine-tenths of the non-Chinese population were slaves and still more were serfs, forced to work without pay at certain seasons of the year. Justice was a farce, sold to the highest bidder. Taxes, which were very heavy, were farmed to Chinese monopolists, and not one-fourth reached the Government. The officials were miserably paid. The Deputy Lord Mayor, who was also Magistrate, High Chamberlain, and Gold Stick-in-Waiting, got 200 ticals or £20 annually. Yet he owned rice fields and mills, had several houses, a steamer, many wives and concubines, and innumerable cattle and slaves. Our party was hospitably entertained by the consul-general, Mr. X., who had been in Bangkok a number of years and had married a Siamese lady. The *ménage* was a curious mixture of European and native, and the house was full of little Siamese serving girls, really domestic slaves, who chattered and ran in and out and behaved in a manner which, I think, scandalised some members of our party. There were already one or two Europeans in minor official positions in Siam, and I think their experiences were very similar to those of the men who came later in greater numbers. As long as they were at their posts they could make the machinery work—if stiffly, but should they turn their backs the whole of their employees went off on a holiday. Probably a little more seriousness has now been imported into public affairs, but I have heard tales, of a fairly recent date, which go to

show that, from highest to lowest, the Siamese regard their European advisers in the same way as does a naughty schoolboy his strict master. At the date of my first visit many of the worst abuses of despotism still remained. Both the king and his secretary, Prince Devawongtse, were genuinely desirous of reform, but they had to tilt against the vested interests of the only educated and influential section of their subjects, which were bound up with the traditions of an Oriental court. The atmosphere of the harem, moreover, was enervating, and palace intrigues innumerable blocked the way to every serious reform. The country was, for the most part, parcelled out among the members of the royal family—that is, the portions which were under control. The Shan States, such as Zimmay, were practically independent, although shortly before this time the king had begun to introduce Siamese commissioners as the basis of a future control. The representative of Great Britain at Bangkok was Mr. (now Sir Ernest) Satow, who has held the position of Minister at the Courts of Siam, China, and Japan, and is also well known as a student of Japanese literature. He had a library of Japanese books at Bangkok.

On our way from Moulmein to Zimmay we stayed with “Johnny” Davis, whom I had known before in the Martaban district. He was a district officer, and had acquired a great reputation from his acquaintance with the language and people, and for his daring. He often travelled in native dress, and lived with the people, and so great did his influence become that he enlisted the villagers to help him in hunting down the dacoits who infested the hilly country. Strange as it may seem, the villagers, who often suffered from the dacoits, were usually loth to betray them. As a matter of fact many of their own people were with the robbers, and also they feared revenge from which the British were not able adequately to protect them. “Johnny” Davis was a terror to the dacoits and bad men of all sorts, and escaped many plots to take his life. One evening he

was sitting in his bungalow with a friend and the local police officer when he heard stealthy steps below. His knowledge of *shikar* helped him to recognise that danger was at hand, and he peeped cautiously over the verandah. A gang of armed men surrounded the house. Stepping back he told his two friends to guard the front entrance while he went to the bedroom for his arms, which he always kept there. The door was shut and bolted on the inside! He heard the breathing of men within, and took his resolve. Drawing back a moment he hurled himself suddenly on the door and burst it open, right on the top of the assailants, who gave back in surprise. Snatching a Burmese sword (*dha*) from the wall where it hung he cut down two men and drove out the others, receiving as he did so a severe wound on the face which would have caught his eyes but for the rim of his spectacles. After this onslaught the would-be murderers dispersed, but many had been recognised and were captured and transported. Davis's exploits when dacoit-hunting would read like one of those stories for boys in which the hero overcomes the most marvellous odds single-handed. With a few police he "surrounded" dacoits in a hut in the depth of a jungle, and frightened them into surrender. Such feats were household talk, and so were his hunting exploits. It is something to think that such a man is only a type of our empire builders who have done their work in obscurity. We may well be proud of an empire where such men are simply flies on the wheel—there are so many of them!

On our march to Zimmay our baggage was entirely carried by elephants, which were the only possible transport animals, and when we crossed the Salween, which is the boundary between Burma and Siam, we found the elephant used for everything—a true beast of burden. At the frontier post of Siam, Dahguin, there was a garrison of thirty so-called Siamese soldiers, armed with old flint muskets, which would have been dangerous to their own neighbourhood but not to the enemy had anyone attempted

to fire them. The guard had all sorts of clothes, a few scattered relics of uniforms of all nations, bare legs, and hair brushed up into a sort of clothes-brush effect. We found our Burmese servants very unhandy at pitching camps, for they are unused to tents. In travelling through the forest country it was usual to cut down small trees and build little huts, which were run up in an hour or so, and this was a saving in baggage which was important. In pine forests, where no small timber or bamboo can be felled, the elephant *howdahs* are utilised as shelters, being specially constructed with this in view.

The first town of any size at which we stopped was Hmine Long-gyee, and here we were received by the chief official of the place, who wore a German helmet and second-hand military jacket, a Siamese *sarong* and French patent leather shoes. His nails gave evidence of his gentility by being so long that he could not have performed manual labour for at least a year. His title was the equivalent of the Burmese *Myo-tsa*—literally “town-eater”—extremely appropriate. He sent five riding elephants to meet us, and treated us with great hospitality, but to our annoyance our Burmese followers gave themselves great airs of superiority over the Shans. They have always despised these people, and our own followers, with their superficial acquaintance with European ideas, arrogated to themselves the superiority of civilised beings over mere savages. The Red Karens, some of whom we saw, have a bad reputation, but both they and the White Karens when civilised are very gentle and charming people, and in Burma already much had been done to Christianise them. They were practically pagans, which accounts for the fact that they were very amenable to missionary influence and became really genuine Christians—not “curry and rice converts.” These Karens were probably tribes driven south from China by the Shans, and then driven back by the Burmese into the hill country.



We noticed in the bazaar that arsenic, vitriol and other poisonous drugs were mixed up with more innocent medicines, and on making inquiry about this we were told that the favourite specific was just then out of stock. It was called *bangilla*, and we were assured of its magic properties for every ailment, so that we puzzled ourselves as to what it could be and thought we had found some new native drug. Eventually it turned out to be an American "pain-killer," and if I remembered the particular brand I would give it a gratuitous advertisement! Our departure from this town was the occasion of a grand procession, and we left in state escorted by the "town eater" in full uniform and his young lady friends in full undress. This is saying a good deal, for the local costume consisted merely of a striped *sarong*, or skirt, and a kerchief over the head. Jackets had been introduced but had not yet "caught on," except in ultra-fashionable circles, and the elder ladies (who had more reason) adopted them less gladly.

After the Karens we met the La Was, a race much disliked and dreaded both by Burmese and Siamese. They are short and ill-formed, dark limbed and strong, though with the protuberant stomachs of inferior races. The true Was occupy a compact block of about 100 miles along the Salween river, and some fifty miles broad to the eastward. There are, however, outlying settlements of Was, some of which deny their relationship with the despised people. Some of the wild Was enjoy an unenviable reputation as head hunters, and generally are little more than savages wearing a minimum of clothing. Such religion as these people possess is simply Shamanism, and the propitiation of *nats* (evil genii) is a great preoccupation with them. The village of the Was where we stopped was called Baw, and on leaving it we were delighted with the beautiful pine forest scenery through which we marched. Below us, through the trees, we got glimpses of the Méping river winding in and out

in a silver thread through green plains. I remember that our followers, Burmese and Hindoos alike (we had a Madrassee sepoy guard with us) were surprised at our delight in the scenery, which suggested nothing more to them than the possibilities of camp and food. I never wanted to travel with a sepoy guard again; the bother about their food, their sleeping and cooking arrangements, and all the details imposed by their caste were the greatest nuisance.

Our train became more and more imposing (and tiresome) as we went along, for local officials came to join us, and all brought "suites" and elephants to match. We had about sixty elephants in tow, and many of them had young ones trotting, or rather rumbling, alongside. The mother elephants kept a careful eye on their offspring and when one slipped into a *khud*, or ravine, all the females made a rush to pull it out. Not even an iron goad in use by a cruel driver would prevent the elephant from attending to her maternal duties. I may say here that I do not credit the elephant with the extraordinary intelligence sometimes attributed to it. I have too often seen it hoodwinked or cajoled—the smallest pussy cat has more real intelligence than the "big earth-shaking beast," and infinitely more strength of character. The nearest approach I have seen to reasoning on the part of an elephant was shown by a male who got a cut in its foot and maggots in the wound. It was brought to the doctor for treatment, and we all stood round anxiously considering its case. The doctor took a syringe, filled it with a strong solution of carbolic, and taking aim at the wound, fired a charge bang into it. The elephant nearly fell over with surprise, lifted its leg in the air and swayed about trumpeting vigorously. Presently, however, it seemed to understand that the pain was inflicted for its good, and used to come every day and stand quietly holding up the hind leg for the doctor. Apart from the maternal instinct and the instinct for revenge, both of which are very

common in brute nature, the elephant can be trained to performances which seem to show intelligence but are really the result of docility. In a Burmese timber yard the elephants are trained to select logs of different sizes and bring them to the right place to be sawed, and afterwards to stack the timber in the proper place. This reflects credit rather on the patience and ingenuity of the trainer than on the intelligence of the animal, and is really in the nature of a circus trick turned to practical account. The instance, frequently given, of elephants stepping over children is due to a very natural cause—they always seek a flat place for their great feet and avoid stepping on anything, and as they cannot see the ground very clearly they step high and cautiously over anything in their track.

As we passed through the Shan country in Northern Siam we found the elephant used not only for transport and for dragging timber but for carrying agricultural produce, and at all the towns we passed there were herds of elephants, with shackled legs, feeding with the bullocks and buffaloes. The shackle is of twisted cane, and if it breaks the animal may have to be tracked for many miles through the jungle. While indispensable during the rains, elephants are difficult to manage in the dry season, and on our journey could not be worked between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., while eighteen miles a day was about their maximum distance on a long march. Nor could they carry more than the load of three small oxen—about two to three hundred pounds, and if they could not get good forage they were soon out of condition. One of the strangest sights was to see the elephant train going up and down a steep descent. They crawled up very cautiously and then slid down, their bellies almost touching the ground. Crossing a swamp or stream they took soundings with their trunks, and in fording a deep river like the Salween the bodies would be quite under water, with the trunks raised to enable them to breathe. The Siamese told us that if, under such circumstances, the elephant lost its

presence of mind it would probably snatch the *mahout* (driver) off its head and throw him under foot. The Siamese elephants are smaller than the African, and we seldom saw them larger than nine feet. The Shans told us stories of how they catch the wild elephants, of which I remember one to the effect that a tame female decoy is used who exercises her fascinations in the jungle and returns followed by love-sick suitors, leading them into a strong bamboo enclosure where they are trapped. "All for love and the world well lost!"—but one would not credit an elephant with so much romance! The belief in the transmigration of souls is, of course, at the root of the respect shown to the white (so called) elephant. The Siamese believe that the soul of a prince or king has passed into the white elephant, and their belief is the same as to white apes and other albinos. The story that Gaudama inhabited a white elephant at one period also affects this superstition, and this animal is believed to bring good luck to the country which possesses it, and has often been the *casus belli* between Siamese and Burmese in past times. In Burma the white elephant was an "estate of the realm" and was actually given a district of which he was "eater," in the suggestive native phrase. He had his court and *woon* or minister, four gold umbrellas, thirty attendants, and a "palace" of his own.

I must mention that all along our march houses were built for us by order of the king. They were stoutly constructed of bamboo, and had raised floors and verandahs, so we were very comfortable. Necessaries were also supplied, such as rice, fish, vegetables, fruit, and firewood, and we thought at first these were official gifts. But when we discovered that they were a local *corvée* we insisted on paying for them, though I very much doubt if the money went to the right quarters, and our conduct won us more derision than gratitude.

At one village where we stayed we had a most embarrassing adventure. Several of us, including the doctor,

undressed by the side of the river and went for a swim. We were thoroughly enjoying ourselves when we heard laughter on the shore, and looking round found that a number of Shan ladies had congregated close to our clothes, and were watching us with much interest and amusement. We thought if we *pretended* to come out they might be seized with modesty and retire. No such thing! They watched our feint with shrieks of laughter, and called to more of their companions to come and see the show. We were in a frightful dilemma, as it was getting chilly, and at last some of us, amid a hail of "chaff" from the unabashed ladies, rushed the position and seized our clothes from under their very noses. The doctor alone refused to emerge, and remained in the river, clad in his own modesty and shivering, until the ladies could be persuaded to depart. I think a great part of the amusement we caused was due to the whiteness of our skins, which were, of course, even fairer where not usually exposed. On another occasion I and another of the party lost our way, while marching ahead of the mission, and stumbling on a small village were most kindly and hospitably received, although the people had never before seen white men. They gave us refreshments, and at first betrayed their natural curiosity with great courtesy, but at last, getting bolder, and having already investigated our watches, hats and clothes, they desired to know if we were "white all over." They were under the impression that our faces and hands were artificially bleached. My companion obligingly took off his coat and turned up his shirt sleeves, and this performance met with an urgent request that he would take off *all* his clothes! His refusal, when understood, was received with such roars of laughter that I have no doubt our sense of propriety seemed quite as curious to them as their lack of it did to us. Perhaps they still think in that village that our bodies were brown!

On the eighteenth day we marched into Zimmay, a procession more imposing in size than in appearance,

for we Europeans were dirty, unkempt and travel-stained, our servants were worse, and we had picked up a tagrag-and-bobtail of followers and elephants. We were well received and lodged in a nice little bamboo bungalow in the style of a French cottage *ornée* specially built for us under the direction of the Siamese commissioner. He was a dapper little old gentleman, who had come from Bangkok and knew all about European ways. It was the strangest thing to sit in the heart of this half-savage country drinking wine and coffee with a little old Siamese who knew London and Paris—for he was a travelled man—and loved to talk, especially of the not too proper *quartiers* of the latter city. “Too much plenty work in London; plenty pleasure Paris,” he said, with a twinkle of his little black eyes. Our cottage *ornée* was furnished with European furniture and Parisian gimcracks, and looked like something out of *opéra-bouffe*. The cooking, on pseudo-French lines, was equally farcical, and represented our old friend’s Paris recollections as carried out by Yunnanese cooks. Luckily there was bread and good China tea.

We got up early next morning to go to market, the great sight of every Oriental town or village, and one that is in full swing soon after sunrise. We liked the look of the people, who are very fair for Easterns, though of a more Tartar cast of countenance than the Burmese. Were it not for the disfigurement of the mouth caused by betel chewing, which protrudes the lips and causes a red saliva to be always trickling from them, they would be good-looking people. On the whole the Shans are quiet, well-behaved folk, and we particularly noticed the quietness of the market—none of the chattering and vociferation usual in Burma. The women came marching in with their fish, fruit or vegetables for sale, balancing their baskets on their heads, and stepping lightly and softly. Their dress was the simple, yet graceful, *sarong*, tucked in below the breasts, and the scarf thrown over the shoulder. How many

thousands of times have I watched these graceful, dark-skinned figures in their scanty draperies of green, orange or saffron, their little round-headed babies sitting on their hips or slung in a scarf, patiently toiling in to market with a heavy load on their heads! I see a long procession of them, with dark, tender eyes and smiling faces, quietly and unostentatiously carrying on the little trade by which their families live. The lords of creation, meanwhile, ride on elephants or squat at ease outside their doors, except at such seasons of activity as paddy-planting or when called out on *corvée*.

Less pleasant sights were the prisoners, who were hobbling about the town in iron collars and leg-irons, their friends and relations being bound to see that they did not escape. This seems rather an ingenious way to avoid the expenses of a prison system. Government did not supply them with food, and they usually had to pay a fine to get free. We saw one poor wretch condemned to be flogged because he had tried to drown himself in the river, and he was tied up for three hours in the broiling sun, and this, too, while he was suffering from fever. I spoke to the jailer, a fat, cheery person and a bit of a wag, who replied with roars of laughter, "The heat of the sun will take last night's damp out of him!" There was another prisoner in the person of a young scapegrace, son of one of the chiefs, whose offence was that he had got drunk and behaved rudely to some ladies. It was unusual in Indo-China at this time to find any punishment meted out to a member of the nobility, but a special part of the prison—a dirt-begrimed den—was here reserved for "first-class offenders."

Just opposite our Parisian villa was a sort of shed which accommodated the Siamese guard of honour accorded to us, which consisted of two companies or detachments of the local force, numbering about sixty in all. The very sight of them sent us into fits of laughter, for they were attired in what looked like the cast-off clothing of a French

light infantry regiment, worn to rags, while the officers were gorgeously bedizened with gold lace, sewn on haphazard all over their tunics. They had European swords hung on anyhow, but usually at such an angle that the wearers tripped over them at every step, and the sight of sights was the guard turning out to salute an officer. The word of challenge was always "Who come dar?" It gave us a shock when we first heard it. After that the guard turned—or rather fell—out higgledy-piggledy, some in rags, some in tags, and some in nothing but dishelouts. The officer or chief saluted, and each man followed suit after his individual taste, the only fixed rule being that there should be no unison either as to time or manner. Each salute had to be acknowledged—sixty-two in all—and the gravity and importance of all the actors in this military pageant had to be seen to be believed.

The head chief, or *chao*, of Zimmay was a nice old gentleman who had a grey mare in his stable. Social gossip said he had been a gay dog, but no sooner had he contracted a "number one" marriage than the lady took him severely in hand. All the little left-handed ladies were bundled off and he was sent for a period to a monastery to purge himself! On his return he found himself surrounded, not by temptations, as in the good old days, but by safeguards. We noticed that the thirty odd female attendants about his house were old and ugly enough to repel anyone, but yet the lady of the house never allowed him to be alone for a moment with one of them, and his betel nut was always rolled and handed to him by her own fair fingers. Even the followers who accompanied him on his official rounds were said to be in the lady's pay, and formed a kind of moral police to this much-married man. We met another old fellow who deserved such a fate as had overtaken the nice old chief. This was a Cingalese, who had come there many years ago. He had travelled about in his time, having visited England with a Siamese mission in a capacity which he did not reveal, but which



we suspected to be of an assistant culinary character. He got very drunk and talked freely, and told us, among other things, that, having twenty-two lawful wives already he was about to take unto himself a twenty-third. As matrimony was highly taxed in Zimmay this represented a considerable outlay in cash, and if, as we hoped, this old wretch had to pay the enhanced rate charged to foreigners, his twenty-three wives must have cost him about three thousand pounds to acquire. We all pitied the (hypothetically) charming girl about to be sacrificed to the drunken, dirty old rascal.

We found American missionaries at work in Zimmay, who were very glad to have converse with Anglo-Saxons again. They came up from Bangkok and had a most tedious river journey, as the boats frequently stranded and had to be dug out. I may mention here that the first impressions I got of missionary work have never been dispelled—*i.e.*, that it is practically waste of time to preach Christianity to Buddhists, whereas there are many pagan and semi-pagan peoples who are eagerly converted and make good Christians. As for Buddhism in the Shan States and in Burma and Siam generally, great differences exist, which must be considered when forming an opinion on the whole. Bishop Bigandet at Rangoon, who had forty or more years' experience of the Burmese, had the highest opinion of the influence of their religion and of its purity and nobility. This was probably because his researches into their literature brought him in contact with theoretical Buddhism, of the purified character which at one time prevailed in Burma. For myself I found very little to admire in Buddhism as I saw it in the Shan States, and while some travellers testify to the purity of life beneath the yellow robe, I saw laziness, immorality and corruption in most of the monasteries we visited. A very intelligent Peguan whom I met at Zimmay admitted this to be the case, but added that no generalisation was possible—there are good priests and bad priests

everywhere. In Burma matters are not nearly so bad, but Buddhism is not the idealised religion of Fielding Hall's books. In Siam not only the common beliefs but the texts of the Pali books have become overlaid with a vast mass of commentaries and fables, and the ritual is debased by many childish observances. King Chulalongkorn was attempting a process of purification at the time of my first visit, but my impression was that the spirit of Buddhism had been lost, and not merely obscured. As for the method of education by which a boy is handed over to the *poongyes* (priests) and lives as a novice in a monastery for several of the most impressionable years of his life, nothing could have a more fatal effect on the manhood of the country. The boy is repressed in all natural and innocent manifestations; at the best he becomes apathetic and lazy in the monastic atmosphere, at the worst he learns to be hypocritical and vicious as well. Modern education is now established in Siam, as well as in Burma, but the hereditary tendencies and the atmosphere created by the thousands of monasteries and tens of thousands of monks leading for the most part an idle and useless life, cannot easily be counteracted. The superiority of the women of both Siam and Burma and their business capacity and energy is largely due to their freedom in youth from any such cramping and stultifying influence as is spread round the boys.

Our mission stayed some weeks in Zimmay, and was fairly successful in arranging the disputes as to forests, which was our main object. We then returned to Moulmein, and I resumed my professional duties somewhat reluctantly. The fact was that during this journey I was bitten by two of the interests which have remained with me ever since. In the first place I became profoundly attracted by the political and ethnological study of Indo-China, and having read all I could lay my hands on upon the subject, I became extremely anxious to push my investigations further. At this time Siam was trembling in the

balance between France and ourselves, as was Upper Burma at a later date. Our Burmese territory was then limited to a strip along the coast, and north of us were the kingdom of Burma, some independent tribes, and the huge block of independent Shan country. I was possessed with the desire to checkmate the advance of France in Tongking by a counter movement towards Yunnan through Siam and the independent Shan country. The scheme I could not work out in detail until later, but the idea was fermenting in my brain, and thus the little mission to Zimmay introduced me to the world of high politics and that fascinating subject of communications which has ever since absorbed so much of my interest.

Soon after I got back from Zimmay I took my first leave and went home, after being absent for twelve years. I received a warm welcome from my father and stepmother and made some useful friends, for my journey to so little known a country as Northern Siam marked me out from the run of young fellows. Among these friends was Colonel Sir Henry Yule, the famous editor of "Marco Polo" and one of the most erudite of Oriental scholars, who was deeply interested in Burma, having been secretary to Phayre's "Mission to Ava" in 1855; he wrote his classic on that mission a few years later. Yule was a most remarkable man who, after a distinguished career in the East as a Bengal engineer, retired in 1862 and settled at Palermo, where he lived for about twelve years, working on his monumental "Marco Polo." After this he was appointed to the India Council and lived in London until his death in 1889. In later years he developed certain eccentricities, among which was an idea that he had no money. His friends and the India Council believed this, and the latter made certain arrangements to provide for his reduced circumstances. It was no uncommon thing on visiting him to be asked to share a frugal meal, or even invited to dinner, with an apology for the fact that he could not afford to offer wine. He was always

interested in travels and scientific research, and was most kind to young fellows like myself, and we all viewed his poverty in later days with grave concern, though we could not understand the cause of it, since he had several sources of income. When he died it was discovered that he left a considerable fortune! Yule was a man of scrupulous honour and very strong feeling, which he carried into politics. His *bête noir* was Gladstone, whom he regarded as England's evil genius and satirised in bitter verses as well as in conversation.

To the influence of this distinguished member of the Royal Geographical Society I now owed an opportunity for carrying out one of my designs. I wanted to explore Southern China with a view to my famous route to Yunnan. The attempts made by the Government of India to enter Yunnan, in later years through Bhamo, had failed disastrously, and I was determined to make the attempt from the China coast, thus reversing the point of attack. It was a fairly ambitious design for a young engineer, with no money except a few pounds saved from his salary of about £450 per annum. My calculations were made carefully. I wanted a companion, and found one who would go anywhere in the person of Charles Wahab, also an engineer whose brother was a great friend of mine. I had enough money to pay our passages out, second-class, to Hong Kong, and to leave a few pounds over for the necessary outfit. We had introductions at Hong Kong and also at Canton, and knew that we could count on hospitality there and get started on our way. A couple of servants and an interpreter would be all we should want, and I knew I could arrange to pay these at the end of our journey—if we got to the end—out of pay which would then be due. I had learnt enough about travelling in the East to know that it can be done without a train of baggage and guards, the only drawback in our case being that neither of us spoke Chinese and that Southern China was far from peaceful at the time. The route we proposed,

and afterwards followed, was to a large extent unexplored, and we intended to make full surveys as we went along. An item in our equipment which would have been outside my slender means was the necessary outfit of scientific and surveying instruments. These were lent me by the Royal Geographical Society at the instance of Colonel Yule. Thus equipped, and with a heart as light as my pockets, I started off for China in a great hurry, anxious to utilise the dry season and to get well on my way during the year's leave to which I was entitled. I trusted to an extension of this leave, if necessary, but my main idea was to make a start, because it seemed at that time such a harebrained escapade, going into the heart of China with very little save the clothes we stood up in, that I was afraid someone or something might intervene and stop us!

## CHAPTER VIII

### I EXPLORE SOUTHERN CHINA

By a fortunate coincidence I found that Sir Harry Parkes, then British Minister at Tokio, was on board the vessel which was taking us out to China. I made his acquaintance and succeeded in interesting him in our proposed journey, which was a very useful thing for me, as he was able to give excellent advice and introductions.

Perhaps I had better explain here exactly what was in my mind, and the task which I had set myself. The position of affairs is well described by my old friend, the late Alexander Michie.\*

“Ever since the conquest of British Burma, and more especially since the treaty concluded with the King of Burma in 1862, political and commercial speculation had been busied with the mountainous country which divides it from the empire of China. The fact that next to nothing was known of that wild region, combined with the prospect of re-opening the old caravan route which had been some time closed by disturbances among the frontier tribes and by Chinese insurgents, constituted a great stimulus to exploration.”

The Chinese insurgents referred to were those Moham-medan rebels who ravaged the province of Yunnan for fifteen years, defying the Chinese Government, and who, at one time, wanted to make a treaty with Britain and actually sent a mission to the Government of India. In 1868 Colonel Sladen, under whom I served later, failed to get through from Burma to China, and seven years later Colonel Horace Browne, whom I knew well in Rangoon

\* “The Englishman in China,” chap. xxiv.

(with whom went my great friend Theo Fforde as police officer), was commissioned by the Indian Government to make another attempt from Bhamo. It was arranged that an interpreter should come down from Peking and meet this expedition on the frontier, and the consular officer selected was one of the most promising in the service, Augustus Margary. Armed with a passport from Peking, which should have secured him every facility and protection, he made his way up the Yangtze to Yunnan-fu (the capital of the south-west province of China) and across the borderlands to Bhamo, where he met Colonel Browne. This was the first time the journey from China to Burma—Bhamo being on the Upper Irrawaddy—had been accomplished by an European. The mission then started off, but at the Burmese frontier there were rumours of trouble in the Kachyen hills, through which they were to pass, and Margary having just come safely through volunteered to go on and prospect. At Manwyne, the first town within Chinese territory, he was treacherously murdered, and Colonel Browne's expedition was attacked and driven back.

The British Government demanded full inquiry, and a long negotiation ensued. Finally a mission was despatched under Grosvenor (with whom were Colborne Baber and Davenport, two of the best men in the Chinese consular service) and this mission proceeded, *via* the Yangtze, Yunnan-fu and Tali, towards the Burmese frontier to conduct a full inquiry on the spot. They did not get to Manwyne or the frontier, but had to be content with holding an abortive inquiry at Teng-yueh, and the responsibility for the murder was never fixed. The Chinese blamed the Burmese and *vice versa*, but general suspicion attached to a border official, named Lisi-tai, who did work for both, and there was undoubtedly a conspiracy between them as they were equally averse to the opening of a route between their countries, or the passage of a large foreign expedition.

The Chefoo Convention followed, and in 1876 Captain Gill, accompanied first by Baber and later by "General" Mesny, an Englishman in the Chinese service, explored Western Szechuan and then from Tali passed out by Bhamo. Gill was killed in 1881 in Egypt, when on a mission with Professor Palmer to destroy the telegraph wire in the desert and thus cut the communication between Constantinople and Arabi Pasha.

My own design was to start from China, instead of from Burma, and to pass across Southern China and then south to Lower Burma. My theory was that a private individual, travelling unostentatiously, might succeed where Government expeditions had failed, and this was confirmed by Sir Harry Parkes, who advised me to omit the usual procedure of applying to Peking for a passport, thereby drawing attention and arousing suspicion. Of course, this increased the risk in one way, since neither the Chinese nor Burmese Government would be held responsible for our lives, and this fact would undoubtedly influence local officials who might be unfriendly for their own reasons. Still we felt pretty certain that a passport from Peking would mean that we should be politely but firmly turned back from the frontier, whereas by going without one we took a fighting chance. My idea was to do more than had yet been attempted, for I meant to cross Southern China from east to west, a route never hitherto followed by a white man, except for a short distance up the Canton river. Then I meant to strike down south, through the independent Shan States, Siamese Shan States, and so to British Burma.

Sir Harry Parkes was well qualified to give advice on this subject, having seen a good deal of China. It was he who, with Loch, was taken prisoner by the Chinese in 1861 and was placed in heavy chains for eleven days and subjected to minor tortures before rescue came; but he was not carried about in a cage, as commonly believed. Parkes refused release except with Loch. They had a very



narrow squeak for their lives, as a quarter of an hour after the order for their release came from Prince Kung an order signed by the Emperor (then in hiding at Mongolia), came for their immediate execution! Although not an erudite scholar or sinologue like Wade, whom he succeeded in 1883, he had the quality of shrewd common-sense, which is extremely valuable in dealing with the Chinese, and despite his experiences he had a high opinion of both Chinese and Japanese. He appeared to me to be a very good type of Englishman, prompt, energetic, tenacious of purpose, and thoroughly and profoundly patriotic, without any trace of sentiment or jingoism. He gave me letters to Sir John Pope Hennessy, governor of Hong Kong, and to Mr. Hewlett, consul at Canton.

On board our steamer were a number of French officers and officials going out to Saigon, and I was much interested in their talk, as this was a period of great activity in Indo-China. I picked up information about the expedition of Garnier and concerning the gifted Louis de Carné, who had written a charming account of their adventurous journey.

At Hong Kong I presented my letter, which at once gained me a favourable reception from the governor. Pope Hennessy was in many ways a very singular character. His talents and personal charm—when he chose—were undoubted, but he was of such a quarrelsome and tricky disposition that to get him out of the Irish parliamentary party (where he was a *mauvais sujet*) he was given a colonial governorship, I think in the West Indies first. He quarrelled with all his subordinates, and fell out with the mercantile population because, wherever he went, he adopted an extreme pro-native attitude and even stirred up discontent among the people. When he was governor of Mauritius, later on, he had a famous dispute with Clifford Lloyd, the Colonial Secretary, who was also a hot-tempered Irishman, and the Government actually sent out a commission to inquire into the rights and wrongs of the

quarrel. Sir Hercules Robinson, who conducted the first inquiry into the affair, had suspended Pope Hennessy, but Sir Henry Holland, Secretary of State, decided to reinstate him. The *Times* of July 16th, 1887, contains a leader with a strong protest against sending him back to a community in which he was so unpopular, beginning "Not guilty—but the prisoner is advised not to do it again!" Hennessy was supported by the Government, largely, it was hinted, because they did not want to bring him home! This stormy petrel was in the very worst odour among the Hong Kong merchants when I arrived, but I believed him to be benevolently disposed towards myself, and he promised to do "anything I asked" to help me on my way.

Among the men I met at Canton was J. N. Jordan, then a junior in the consular service and now Sir John Jordan, British Minister at Peking, who assisted us greatly in our preparations. It was at first suggested that he should go with us as interpreter, but he could not be spared from his post as assistant to Mr. Hewlett. At Canton I had also met J. Stewart Lockhart, now Commissioner of Wei-hai-wei, who was then living in the native city with a teacher, studying the language, in which he was already proficient. We struck up a friendship, and it seemed to me that as an interpreter was a necessary part of our expedition, Lockhart was the man for the job. He was extremely keen on it, and I told him that the Governor had promised "anything I asked," and would certainly give the necessary permission (Lockhart being in the Hong Kong civil service). I was met, however, by a refusal, and had to look elsewhere. At Canton I was hospitably entertained by Mr. Hewlett, who lived in a picturesque *yamen* in the Chinese city, while most of the Europeans had houses (as now) in the foreign settlement.

The first difficulty we experienced was in getting anyone to go with us as servant or interpreter. Although a Chinese will usually go anywhere or do anything for money it seemed impossible to persuade any Cantonese

to go up the river and venture into Yunnan, as the Taiping rebellion had left a bad name, especially on the river. At last we found two "boys"—Chinese serving-men are all "boys," the pidgin-English for a male child being "smallo-boy"—and although they were not well trained they were active and strong. I may mention here that an application for the post was made by one gentleman (sent on from Hong Kong by a friend) who rejoiced in the name of George Porphyros. He was a native of Corfu and knew no Chinese, but had he been a veritable sinologue his appearance would have damned him, for he was exquisitely dressed—far better than I—and carried a most immaculate portmanteau. The boy I actually engaged proved a very poor cook and, unlike most Chinese servants unspoilt in foreign service, was entirely without resource. We had some difficulty to persuade him to moderate the amount of pork, for this is of course the Chinese idea of delicacy. We also persuaded him not give us the favourite Chinese dish "pi-tan," sulphurated eggs. Bird's nest and shark's fin were, of course, luxuries outside our reach. I may mention here that the idea which still seems to prevail in England that the Chinese enjoy a diet of puppy dogs and cats or rats is ludicrously beside the mark. The poorer classes eat rice, washed down with soup, and flavoured with a bit of salt fish, cabbage, or some tasty condiment. Wealthier people eat pork, vegetables and macaroni; duck and goose are delicacies, and the really well-to-do have rich soup, made from oysters or shell fish, pork, fish, game, fowls or ducks, vegetables and many condiments. Curry is unknown in the native *cuisine*, though Chinese cooks learn to make it to perfection. As long as my duffer was on the boat we did not do so badly, but on the march he was more trouble than he was worth, for our food, consisting at the best of times of hard-boiled eggs, rice, tea, curry and tinned soup, could have been prepared by anyone. However, we had to make some concession to dignity, as no self-respecting Chinaman would have

gone on an expedition without a cook. In later years I realised to the full the idiocy of my first Chinese *chef* when I travelled with another, and had the most tempting and nutritious meals knocked up out of practically nothing, and always ready at the shortest notice at the end of a march.

We took no store of tinned food. Tea, flour, Liebig, Kof's concentrated soup, and medicines were about all we carried, and the cook was supposed to get fowls, ducks, fish, eggs, vegetables and rice as best he could *en route*—as a matter of fact we had few of these—and to make bread for us, as it is not Chinese food. Our "boy" was one of the *tinchais* (messengers) from Mr. Hewlett's *yamen*, and spoke English a little. Although he was not an educated man, his connection with the *yamen* had taught him the etiquette which it was so important for us to follow in our relations with officials, and had also given him a working knowledge of *mandarin*, the official language. I had promised both these boys three times the usual wages and their fares back, to be paid when we got to Burma.

The interpreter question was more difficult. At last I secured the services of a Chinese gentleman, Mr. Hong Beng-Kaw, whose acquaintance I had made, and who was well qualified, having been educated in Scotland and Germany, and we congratulated ourselves on having secured a companion as well as an interpreter.

We hired a *ho-tau*, or houseboat, of the type commonly used on Chinese rivers. It was really quite a luxurious floating home—the best we were to know for many a long day. The *ho-tau* was a flat-bottomed hulk, with a deck-house divided into three compartments by sliding partitions. At the bow a space was left for working the heavy oar-helm, and on each side of the boat, about a foot above water, ran an eighteen-inch footboard along which the crew ran or walked as they poled. The deck, or rather roof, was waterproofed, and all sorts of odds and ends were littered over it, and in the stern was a small space

where the crew was packed at night. Over this was a tiny cabin for the captain, who frequently took his wife along with him. Ours did not on this trip, for which we were grateful, as these ladies frequently have terrible tongues which they exercise on the crews.

Our living and sleeping room was the largest and central cabin, which was decorated with six painted panels framed in gold and containing aphorisms from Chinese classics. One of these was most reassuring: "This, my narrow craft, where I live virtuously, is more secure than the Imperial throne." Despite this assurance the danger from pirates was not inconsiderable, and we had a small arsenal for defence. Two cannon, about one and a half inch bore, were mounted imposingly on either side of the roof-deck, chiefly, I think, to awe beholders. Inside, we had twelve old-fashioned weapons resembling blunderbusses except that the barrels were straight, six pikes, three three-pronged pikes, three halberts, half-a-dozen ancient horse pistols and one revolver. I cannot say that our armoury inspired us with any great sense of safety, and from the obvious blue funk into which the crew fell every now and then I think they shared our doubts. The fore cabin was used by our servants and for cooking, and the back cabin, which in the ordinary way would have been the cook house, was reserved for the interpreter. The sides of the deck house, made of wretchedly pieced wooden framing and pierced with many windows, were excellent as draught-producers in hot weather but afforded little protection from the cold, and the frightful yells of the crew, as they ran heavily along poling just outside, were not conducive to meditation or composition. In the upper reaches the boat had to be "tracked" and at other times we hoisted a sail, and so we journeyed up river towards the unknown. When the boat had to be poled through rapids the captain propitiated the gods by strewing the water with imitation paper-money, and I noticed that the sailors "whistled for the wind."

Our contract with the captain of the *ho-tau* was skilfully drawn by the advice of wise friends in Canton. If we were delivered at Pe-sê—the navigation limit—in thirty-five days he was to get so much, and for every day under that time five dollars more, but for every day over five dollars less. I wonder if any other boatman in the world would make such a contract! After leaving Wuchau our own work began, for we had to work in turns from sunrise to sunset in surveying the river. Only the portion between Canton and Wuchau hitherto had been surveyed (as far back as 1859) and Chinese maps are not at all accurate except where taken from Jesuit surveys.

At Wuchau-fu, now nominally a treaty port, a “gun-boat” was attached to us as a protection from pirates. It was a very primitive little craft and did not inspire us with much confidence, but it lifted a weight from the heart of our captain. We paid a visit to it one evening and found that its armoury consisted of three small, antiquated English cannon, one thoughtfully marked OLD. We were now in the heart of the country ravaged by the Taiping rebellion, and saw many evidences in the ruined cities and deserted fields along the river. For safety and to secure ourselves from observation we had now adopted Chinese dress—loose white or blue cotton breeches, with silk gaiters over them tied round the ankle, and Chinese white cotton stockings and thick-soled shoes, long blue coat and a white jacket underneath, with a short loose padded silk coat and a collar to be turned up or down. On our heads we wore a cup-shaped hat with a tassel and queue or pigtail attached underneath, and in the sun a huge, heavy straw hat, thirty inches in diameter. The dress was very comfortable, and when we got used to it and wore it with the right air the people on the banks and villages ceased to take notice of us. Both of us had long moustaches, as many Chinese have, and Wahab had sacrificed his long beard.

I cannot linger over the details of our voyage up

stream, with its interesting glimpses of native life in the towns and villages we passed, because a full account, written from diaries laboriously compiled at the time, is contained in my book "Across Chrysé." One of the most curious things we saw was the fishermen fishing with cormorants, the birds having a ring round their necks so that they cannot swallow the fish but yield it up to their master's net. Sometimes they are trained to give it up without any artificial prohibition. This curious custom has been often described, but I have never seen it except on the Canton river. As we passed through Kwangsi we began to experience hostility on the part of the natives, and avoided the larger towns as far as possible.

At Pe-sé it was our intention to leave the *ho-tau* and send back in her some of the heavier instruments and books while we continued for a short distance in a light canoe before taking the road over the mountains to Yunnan. For some days, however, there had been a lack of harmony in our company, which was chiefly attributable to the attitude of Mr. Hong Beng-Kaw. He had never quite accepted the position which he was intended to fill, and, although we were only too anxious to retain him and to treat him on terms of perfect equality, in such an expedition as ours there had to be a leader, and I intended, as Americans say, to be It. In addition to this it became perfectly apparent to us that our interpreter's heart was failing him as we neared the more arduous and perilous part of our journey. He had imagined a far more imposing and luxurious expedition, with coolies to carry us in chairs, and when he found we meant to go on foot he was a good deal damped in his enthusiasm. Moreover, all sorts of stories about the dangers ahead were retailed to us, and our boatmen brought us the news that a placard had been posted at Nanning, in the gambling quarter of the city, saying that two foreigners were coming there, and calling on the people not to allow the "red

barbarians" to come to their country, destroy their religion, and take away their good luck. The reward of fifty *taels* was offered to the first man to give information of our arrival, and two hundred *taels* (about £50) for each of our heads. The rumour of a placard had reached us below Nanning, and when we got to that place we did not land, or stay a second longer than we could help, but the effect of all this on the nerves of Mr. Hong Beng-Kaw was not salutary.

He was a rather delicately made, effeminate-looking man, tall and handsome, highly cultivated, and fond of quoting Goethe and Alfred de Musset. I think he really lacked the nerve for such an expedition as ours. In the Oriental phrase he had "no heart." His obvious defection was extremely unsettling to the "boys," and we began to wonder whether any of the company would go farther than Pe-sê. When we were having negotiations with officials I became convinced that my interpreter was carrying on conversation on his own account and the situation became intolerable. I believe I lost my temper at last and threw a book at his head—I am sure he richly deserved it. He turned to me during an interview with some minor official and told me to "give him that book." As I had been sitting there, getting very impatient at the wholly gratuitous conversation he was carrying on, this was a little too much! I think he was a good deal surprised, and the minor official must have been frightfully scandalised, but this incident had the desirable effect of bringing things (in more than one sense) "to a head." Hong Beng-Kaw said, that after such an insult he could never go on with us, so he abandoned us, in the most airy manner, to our fate. I sent him back to Canton in the *ho-tau*, paying his fare and salary and sending word to my friends to give him more if they thought it right. This made most serious inroads on the very limited supply of stamped *sycee* silver which we had with us. We had not intended to go to any city to which it would have been



possible to get a note of credit, so all our worldly wealth was in silver ingots, packed loose among our clothes, from which we cut off and weighed what was needed from time to time. I may mention here that as a Chinaman, educated in Europe, Hong Beng-Kaw's position with his own people at this time was very precarious. The qualifications which to-day would open the door of promotion were at that time enough to inspire distrust and dislike. He became a subordinate in some *yamen* for several years, and then, in disgust and disillusionment, he cast off the outward trappings of Occidental civilisation, married and lived in Chinese fashion, and became a virulent anti-foreigner. A clever but extremely bitter pamphlet from his pen called "Vox Populi" held Europe and her civilisation up to contempt. When I last heard of him he was in the *yamen* of the Viceroy Chang Chih-Tung.

At the news of Hong Beng-Kaw's decision the servants said they would go back too, and it looked as though our well-laid plans were ruined. But my companion and I were determined to go on, nothing could have deterred us, and we made up our minds to make our way alone to Yunnan-fu, where we knew that we should find a French mission station. The kindness of a chance acquaintance had secured me a letter from the head of the Jesuit Order in England, Father Beckx, which commended me strongly (though not a co-religionist) to the good offices of all Catholic missionaries. Having made out this plan we told the servants, and then the unexpected happened. The *tinchai* declared that he could not let us go alone but would go "anywhere" with us. He acted from mixed motives, for he would not have dared to return to Mr. Hewlett and acknowledge that he had deserted us without either servant or interpreter, and in case of anything happening to us he would have got into serious trouble. Still, he was a useful man at the start, intelligent and handy without being much educated, and he did not show the white feather till later in our subsequent adventures.

With him to interpret we could spare Mr. Hong Beng-Kaw, and carry out our original plan, and this we proceeded to do after the most kind and friendly treatment from the Prefect and the General of Pe-sê. We were particularly flattered that these officials asked to have their photographs and those of their children taken, and the General even went outside Chinese etiquette so far as to ask us to take his "humble wife." This man was actually at Teng-yueh at the time of Margary's murder and ought to have been able to protect him, but declared that he was in mourning at the time—mourning with the Chinese meaning entire retirement from life, even official duties. He gave us letters and a guard of "braves" to escort us on the first part of our journey, and we went off from Pe-sê with great dignity and much inward jubilation. I remember that the most awe-inspiring feature about our Chinese guard was the word "brave" (or its nearest equivalent) embroidered on the breasts of their coats.

As we ascended the river in our canoe we thought the scenery very like parts of Scotland, the steep mountain sides which ran down to the river being covered with pine trees. Little rafts of bamboo floated past us at first, but going up stream got more and more arduous, and had not the canoe been built of some strong but supple wood it would have been dashed to pieces on the rocks. The Canton river, however, has no gorges or rapids to compare with those of the Yangtze.

When we left the canoe our procession started with some state—the *tinchai* (now promoted interpreter *vice* Hong Beng-Kaw resigned) riding in a chair (the gift to me of the prefect), the cook and "boy" (the latter picked up somewhere) with their ponies, then ourselves on foot and a number of baggage mules and coolies, for we felt it wiser to humour our suite in starting. I made up my mind, as soon as we were sufficiently far on the journey to prevent them "giving notice," to cut down the dignity of our procession considerably, for my purse was by no

means equal to the *cortège* of baggage animals and chair coolies. The "boy," by the way, was a character. I don't know where he came from, but he had certainly never seen European service before, and had the quaintest ideas. He used to stretch out his arm and take away the dish or plate when he thought we had had enough, and if we asked for rice he brought tea, for a pipe he brought hot water, and so on, till we could have slain him but for his being so engagingly willing and plucky. I began cutting down expenses by engaging a small mule caravan, such as are to be found all over Yunnan and the Shan States. It came cheaper than any other mode of transport, and obviated all worry or friction as it was done on contract—a third paid in advance and the rest on arrival. Later on, as our baggage decreased—for we shed worn-out clothes and superfluities as we went along—I retrenched even more severely, keeping only the one chair for ceremonial entrances into towns, several animals for baggage, and one to carry the servants—which it never did. In truly Chinese fashion they quarrelled over precedence in riding, and ended by both walking for a considerable number of days. These reductions in the establishment were received by the staff with good nature, and as a matter of fact a Chinese servant, though he likes his master to make a good show and live up to his income, does not resent necessary economies. What my poor cook did not like was the drenching mist and driving rain which we often encountered, and which made him the most abject picture of misery I ever beheld. He must often have sighed for a snug opium den in Canton.

Shortly after leaving the river, and indeed even on the canoe among our boatmen, we noticed that the people were much fairer and that their hair was brown, not black like that of the Chinese. I know now, as I only began to suspect then, that we had got into a country peopled by the great Tai or Shan race, known locally by a great

variety of names, which had its cradle in the Tibetan highlands, as already noted, and spread southwards over so large a section of Indo-China. The people were more friendly and better behaved than the Chinese of Kwangsi or their neighbours who had settled in Yunnan. There are wild tribes, of course, and these have a very bad reputation among the Chinese, but on the whole the aborigines seemed very quiet and kindly. We marched and marched over an uneven plateau—very uneven it seemed to us at times—sometimes in sun, sometimes in rain, surveying and taking observations as we went, glad when we got at nightfall to a village where there was an inn whose principal room was not too dirty and too stuffy. Here we put our feet into hot water, for one can always get hot water in China, and by the time we were revived—and nothing revives one as this footbath does—some sort of dinner was ready. As soon as our diary was written up—and, oh! what an effort that operation was—we fell asleep from sheer exhaustion, oblivious of the many eyes glued on us from the crevices and broken paper panes of our hostelry. We both began to suffer a little from exposure, and I had attacks of rheumatism, but until we had been several weeks on the march I was never once obliged to use the chair. I was then only carried a few miles to the next village, where the best accommodation was a “stable-inn”—a yard with a narrow enclosure surrounding it. Here the *tinchai* woke up in the night and found a big, black pig sharing his straw bed.

After leaving Wuchau, on the lower reaches of the Canton river, we had begun to explore, as no other European had penetrated beyond that point. Nor had anyone passed through southern Yunnan from east to west as we marched, though the French expedition had touched our route at Szumao, striking north again at Mengtzu. Indeed, from Wuchau until we reached Tali we were in country never before visited by white men (except by the

French for a small part) and to our ordinary fatigues were added those of making a continuous survey and writing up everything at the end of the day's march.

The country was extremely beautiful—some of the finest mountain scenery I have ever beheld—and the aboriginal people were most interesting, presenting such a variety of costume, appearance and customs that we, like other travellers since, believed them to belong to many different races, though they are all of the Tai or Shan race. The country was fairly populated and, even after the trials of the Mohammedan rebellion and the visitation of plague which followed, showed signs of prosperity. Some of the valleys were thickly cultivated, and the number of temples, pagodas, bridges, and other expensive structures were evidences of comfort. Nearly all the travellers who of recent years have passed into Yunnan have come from the Yangtze through the northern part of the province, and have compared Yunnan unfavourably with the rich and populous parts of China from which they had come, but the comparison ought to be made with other parts of Southern China (Kwangsi, for example) and neighbouring parts of Indo-China, when the conclusion would be more favourable. My desire was that a line from British Burma—a caravan route first, followed by a railway—should open communications with Yunnan *viâ* the Siamese Shan States, with a branch to Bangkok, and secure these virgin markets for British trade. The integrity of Siam would thus be secured, and the approach to the Upper Yangtze opened. This was the great scheme which had occurred to me during my journey to Zimmay a couple of years before. It has never been realised, but the French have not lost sight of their project, and to-day a railway has just been completed from Tongking to Mengtsu (in Yunnan) which will reach Yunnan-fu next year.

The greatest difficulty we had to fear was that the rains would render it impossible to travel down from the Yunnan plateau to the lower levels of the Shan States,

and this was eventually the one factor in the case with which we could not contend. When we reached Szumao, the point near the Shan frontier whence we wished to strike south, we were met by opposition from the local officials and from our own servants. I thought then, and still think, that had we been provided with an English interpreter, who would have been with us in our desire to push through at all hazards, we might have carried out our programme. But we were indescribably hampered by the obvious desire of the *tinchai* to raise difficulties instead of overcoming them. The upshot of this was that the prefect refused permission for us to go on, and without that we could get no transport. To go without was impossible, especially as Wahab had to be carried, and I had to acquiesce with as good a grace as I could assume in the wreck of my plans. It was the bitterest moment of my life, especially as I was not able to find out how far the difficulties were real and how much they owed to the vivid imagination of my chicken-livered interpreter.

It interested me, in reading a recent book of travel in Western China by Mr. Johnstone, of Wei-hai-wei, who has the inestimable advantage of being able to speak Chinese, to find that he was deterred by the rains from making his way southwards by much the same route that I had projected. In his case the muleteers refused to proceed. The difficulty was, of course, purely a matter of season and health, since the extension of British authority over the Shan country and the disappearance of what was in my time a no-man's-land has removed the other obstacles which I should have had to encounter.

The one consolation I had in my disappointment was that the necessary change of plan enabled me to get even with the *tinchai*, for a time at all events. I now decided that I would strike north to Tali, a march of twenty days, which would afford me an opportunity of exploring another part of Yunnan. Tali was on the route of the Grosvenor mission and Gill's expedition, so it was not

specially interesting to me, but it was the only place where I ran any chance of finding someone who could help me to reach the Burmese frontier at another point. I knew a French Roman Catholic mission had been at work there, sent from Yunnan-fu, where there was a bishop. My introductory letters from Bishop Chose at Canton and from Father Beckx, the head of the Jesuit Order, would, I knew, secure me the good offices of any French missionaries. I also hoped at Tali to find a Chinese-speaking Shan with whom I could communicate in Burmese and thus get rid of the *tinchai*. I therefore told him—to his great surprise, for he was full of pride and insolence at his victory over me—that I did not need his services any more. He had, in reality, no desire to be abandoned at this place, which would involve his making the long journey back alone, so he changed his note at once and begged me to take him on.

Although we were heartbroken at being turned back from Szumao the interest of our march towards Tali consoled us, for it lay through country inhabited by aboriginal tribes whose appearance and manners were sufficiently various to give new interest. We received many tokens of the friendliness of the people. On one occasion I went into a peasant hut for shade and fell asleep. On waking I found the lady of the house and her husband, who instead of objecting to my presence brought a mattress and some tea and rice cake, and finally a palm leaf fan with which the lady kept off the flies while I had a refreshing nap. The women are often very comely and fair and the men fine specimens of humanity. Poor Wahab was now too ill to walk at all, suffering from dysentery and consequent ailments. He persisted in drinking unboiled water, which the Chinese themselves never touch and which I myself avoided. In many parts of Yunnan we came across beautiful-looking streams over which were erected tablets, warning travellers that these waters are poisoned. Probably they contain some dangerous

mineral or are polluted in some way, but they must be pretty bad for the Chinese to take such precautions. We were both knocked up when we got to Tali, but there a pleasant surprise awaited us.

I had expected to find a French Roman Catholic mission there, but what was my delight to hear an English voice outside my inn ! The owner was a member of the China Inland Mission, Mr. George Clarke, who with his wife had recently come down, a long and toilsome journey, from the Yangtze. They had had a great deal of discomfort and worse to endure, being at first unable to get a decent house or a servant to wait on them, but by tact and patience they had overcome the Chinese prejudices to the extent of establishing a school for a few children. The heroism necessary for such an enterprise for an English lady is something beyond mere words. Needless to say, a meal presided over by a white lady seemed to us the height of luxury, and we stayed a week at Tali, being doctored and cared for by our kind friends. Fifteen years later I met Mr. Clarke again at Tientsin and reminded him of our first encounter.

At Tali we were on the track of other travellers, and had not the stimulus of exploration to carry us on. Nevertheless, the journey which we had still to make, to Bhamo, was the worst and most dangerous part of our whole expedition. This was because the rains had set in, no caravans were travelling, the roads were almost impassable, and the country bordering Upper Burma was said to be in a disturbed state, which we found to be only too true. Other drawbacks, such as the fact that plague was raging along some parts of the route to be traversed, troubled me comparatively little, as we had already come through plague-stricken valleys, but I realised the danger later on when my mule stumbled over a dead body outside a village and I saw my muleteers making a *détour* to avoid it, though they never attempted to warn me from touching the corpse. With the help of Mr. Clarke we engaged our



caravan and started off with only seven mules—two for ourselves, two for our servants, and three for baggage. We deposed the cook from his office, as it was ridiculous paying him for European cookery when his limit was rice and hard-boiled eggs! He came along with us, but we all now fed Chinese fashion, on contract, like the men of our caravan. This was a great economy, and relieved a little of our ever-present anxiety about money. After a couple of days we were riding through a small town when I heard the word “Englishman!” in French accents, and looking up saw, over a garden wall, a French priest in Chinese dress. Père Terrasse was delighted to have a chat with us. The poor fellow was murdered later on. Two days more and we reached Chu-tung, where we found another French missionary, Père Vial, who set us on our way next day most courteously.

After ploughing along for several days, it became apparent to us that something was wrong. And here I must remind the reader that, throughout all our physical troubles and preoccupations with what we saw, we had to keep our eyes and ears wide open, to remember trustworthy itineraries, and ask frequent questions and calculate distances, for we could not trust in these matters to our escort or servants. When we left Tali, our head muleteer had contracted to get us to Bhamo and to find out *en route* which was the best road to take, for at one point a new road had been made which was longer than the old one and ran alongside the Salween river for some distance—a region reputed most unhealthy in this season. The word “road” conveys an idea to European ears which is somewhat erroneous. There are “roads” in China, both bad and good, but these were not “made” in our sense of the word. This “road” had been “made” by the border official, Li-si-tai, the man who was responsible for the Margary murder and a person of whom I had heard a good deal and mostly evil. On my inquiring as to which road we were to take, I was told “whichever I chose,” and

eventually I detected a nice little plot, in which our worthy interpreter joined with the muleteer. The contract was that the latter should be responsible for choosing the road, but by shunting the decision on to me he would be able to lead me to the frontier, probably embroil me in difficulties and, while exonerating himself, would be in a position to make terms for our safe return to Tali.

Luckily we were not so very far from Chu-tung, where we had left Père Vial, and we felt that if we could only get rid of the rascally interpreter we should get along better. We arranged that I should stay where I was, while Wahab rode back to seek help and advice from the Père. We ordered two mules but they never turned up, and although we hunted the town we could not hire any—we had been forestalled. The two conspirators were in high glee, especially when that evening we went out for a walk, called at the magistrate's, and, sending in our cards by the boy Akiu, presented our compliments to him and said we were returning to Chu-tung next morning. Our Chinese was equal to this emergency, though not very fluent. "How could we go without mules?" chuckled our friends. Next morning, however, we paid our bill, put all the silver we possessed in our pockets, and started off on foot, remarking to our dumbfounded suite that they could either stay or go as they chose. At midday, when we were sitting at a wayside inn having some tea, they rode up, rather crestfallen. After a most trying three days' journey, during which I had a severe attack of fever, which I "brought out" by doses of "pain-killer" in hot tea—a drastic but effective remedy—we reached Chu-tung and found Père Vial, on whom all our hopes were now centred.

He had intended going down to Burma some months later and with the greatest willingness offered now to accompany us, though it meant no light sacrifice to attempt the journey at this season. I sacked the *tinchai*, giving him his fare back to Canton and a draft for his

wages, payable only if we got through safely to Rangoon, as I thought he would deserve nothing if we came to grief. Besides, unless I survived to draw my next half-year's salary, there would be no money for anyone! There was a caravan of Cantonese traders going back from Tali, so I knew he could get through, and in fact I afterwards saw him again in the *yamen* at Canton. I felt and wrote bitterly about this man at the time, for he was a new specimen to me, and I expected truthfulness and loyalty, which were really virtues outside his ken. It was an immense relief to start off again with Père Vial to do the talking, and not to feel the sensation of helplessness which comes of being doubtful as to whether one is being deceived or not.

I cannot here give the details of the really terrible march which the brave French Père, Wahab, and myself and our two servants now made. The wonder is that any of us survived. The frightfully bad mountain tracks were often torrents; at times we marched through two feet of water for miles. More than once we had not even the poor shelter of a Chinese inn at night, but took refuge in rough bamboo huts, and on one occasion had only a few planks to cover us. We hung on only to our note-books, a few medicines, and our photographic materials, for we had taken dry plates along the route and felt that to lose them would be a thousand pities. On one occasion, crossing a swollen stream, we nearly lost these precious plates, taken and preserved with so much sacrifice. I looked back from the bank and saw the mule in the act of foundering in mid-stream. The muleteer was beside me—for a moment—the next saw him shot unexpectedly into mid-stream, where he was able to persuade the mule *not* to lie down in the water. I am a little vain of this exploit, because I think most men would have gone personally to the rescue of the mule, whereas I had the presence of mind to throw the muleteer in! Our money was now all gone, our superfluous clothes and our bedding were left behind and also

such firearms as we possessed. As for the last, I have never had any faith in them as protection while travelling and have never used them. On this journey the absence of them probably saved our lives—we were not worth robbing or murdering. The fact that we carried revolvers at all on our journey was a concession to public opinion. As I said in “Across Chrysé,” I consider an umbrella a far better protection in China, and, better still, a baby, if one could only borrow one! With a baby one would have been quite safe, for the Chinese love of little children, added to their curiosity, would have disarmed hostility. As we could not procure a baby, we found our little pet monkey, Jacko, who rode on our shoulders, was the cause of much diversion. We were quite heartbroken to part with Jacko, but had to leave him behind with the mission children at Tali.

It may be imagined that in the process of “jettison” everything in the nature of curiosities went overboard. The only thing I preserved was a round slab of Tali marble, ten inches in diameter, and a packet of Puerh tea, sent by one of the officials to “The most illustrious lady in England.” If it is wondered why we risked ourselves in such a journey at this season, instead of stopping at Tali, it must be remembered that I was still an engineer in the P. W. D. on leave, which was nearly up. I had no money, and depended on the salary I had already forestalled to pay the expenses of the journey at the other end. We could not stay as dependants on the charity of the missionaries, who had barely enough for themselves. I was also very anxious to get my companion out of a country so deadly to one in his state of health and where he could get neither nursing nor proper food and medicines.

We soon found out the mystery of the two roads. Li-si-tai had closed the old road, where the Kachyens had levied toll on travellers, and had opened a new one, after executing several Kachyen chiefs. As a consequence the Kachyens were murdering anyone who came their way

from China. This was a cheerful prospect for us, but we were fairly desperate. We reached the nadir of our miseries when, in our journey through the Kachyen country, we landed at a village where the chief was absent. We had a recommendation of some sort to this chief and hoped to find him friendly, but his wife, knowing nothing of us, was doubtful and would not sell us anything to eat. We were therefore detained in the communal hut, which, like all Kachyen buildings, was pitch dark inside, having no windows. It was not pleasant to sleep there, because one's throat might be cut at any moment before one could see an assailant. We had nothing to read, nothing to eat but rice, and we had arrived at the stage when rice without condiments was so repulsive to us that we would have starved rather than eat it. Poor Wahab, indeed, could not digest it. It rained steadily, and we sat in the black hut with gnawing insides and ears strained for the footstep of a possible assassin.

After two or three days—I don't think it was more, but it seemed centuries—the chief came back, and after a good deal of suspense was pleased to be friendly to us, and consented to take us to Bhamo for a consideration. His wife prepared a dish of vegetables with chillies, upon which we fell with famished eagerness. Another nightmare of riding down slippery tracks and fording swollen streams, of nights spent in vain attempts to sleep, tormented by sand-flies, and of food which had no savour even when we were almost starving—at last we reached Bhamo and the unspeakable luxury of a house owned by American missionaries—Mr. and Mrs. Roberts. They said, later on, that three more disreputable-looking loafers had never crossed their sight. We wore straw sandals and ragged trousers tied with string, dirty, ragged flannel shirts, unkempt hair, and disreputable Yunnanese straw hats. Never, never shall I forget the sensation of getting into a real tub of hot water with plenty of soap and bath towels to get dry with—it was the first real bath since we left Canton six months

before! Then we sat down to a table laid with spotless linen and decked with dainties—bread, butter, jam, and milk—such as we had dreamed of for months. I must mention here that twenty-two years after this I met the kind lady of this feast in a small American town in New York State (where I was a chance visitor) to which she had come home, only a few years before, for the education of her children. We stayed at Bhamo with Mr. Stevenson, of the China Inland Mission, who shared his house, his clothes, and his slender purse with us, enabling us to pay off the Kachyen chief. I wallowed in luxury for a few days, but poor Wahab got worse, and the cook and Akiu were now both ill. Fortunately I had somewhat recovered and was pretty well when we started off down the Irrawaddy on a steamboat. I recollect that I didn't want to look at scenery or anything—only to rest! At Mandalay I felt myself at home once more, among the Burmese faces and ways to which I was so well accustomed. Here we stayed three days to get another steamer for Rangoon, and we bade good-bye to Père Vial after I had arranged for paying his expenses through Bishop Bourdon. My good friend the Père waited on for a better season before returning to Chu-tung, which I hope he reached with less danger and fatigue than it had cost us to leave it. I believe he is still at his work in Southern China.

We went all the way to Rangoon by steamer, as Wahab was too ill to be taken by train from Prome as we had intended. At Rangoon the senior civil surgeon, Dr. Griffiths, most kindly took him to his own house, where he had every care and attention, while the servants went into hospital. Dr. Griffiths could not save poor Wahab's life, but he helped to save mine subsequently. In 1894 I was taken suddenly ill, and from my rooms in London I sent him a message, as he was in England at the time. He came at once, found me at a critical stage, and brought in the specialist who was able to deal successfully with my case. After I had placed Wahab with this kind doctor I

waited a week or so to look after my friend, and at last he was better and was sent to Calcutta *en route* for home. He started off again, apparently much recovered, but partly owing to his own imprudence he had a relapse and died in the Suez Canal. He was the pluckiest and most patient of comrades, despite his ill-health on the journey, and never once wanted to turn back, but I am afraid he did not value his life sufficiently.

At Rangoon I saw Sir Charles Bernard, the Chief Commissioner, and Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff, my chief engineer, both of whom were much interested in my journey and wrote to the Viceroy recommending me for some mark of approbation. I was eventually granted full pay during the period of my exploration and extra allowances during the six months employed in bringing the scheme before the public, and this enabled me to fulfil all my monetary obligations. I then saw my Cantonese servants off for their homes and parted—even from the duffer cook—not without regret. Akiu, the coolie boy, was genuinely affected! Those who do not credit the Chinese with such virtues as faithfulness, gratitude or devotion are much beside the mark.

I then got a telegram from Sir C. Aitcheson, formerly Chief Commissioner of Burma, asking me to go to Simla to see the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, and give an account of my journey, so I started off and was most kindly received, staying several days with the Aitchesons. I had been requested to read a short account of my journey before the United Service Institution at Simla—rather a cruel honour to bestow on a man in my state of health. My nerves were a good deal shaken and, never being very confident on a public platform, I got through my performance with the greatest difficulty and little credit. Lord Ripon and the financial secretary, Major Evelyn Baring (since Lord Cromer) gave me letters to the home authorities which ensured me a good reception. Major Baring and his wife were particularly friendly and

sympathetic and gave me letters to Lord Northbrook. The future Lord Cromer had still to make his reputation, and his appointment as financial secretary had been much criticised. In Bombay a number of my fellow countrymen got up a public dinner as a send-off when I should start for home. On my railway journey from Simla, however, which I had expected to get me to Bombay for this dinner, the train broke down and I was stranded! I dined off *chupatties* while my hosts were drinking my health in champagne and wondering where on earth I was, as the telegraph had broken down. I got through in time to catch the steamer, but I shall always feel that Fate owes me a good dinner!

I went home first-class—I felt like “doing myself well”! When I got home I found myself quite a lion—if only a very little lion! My father treated me almost like an equal—indeed, there was nothing good enough for me. One of my first visits was to Colonel Yule, who was delighted with my success, and he and Sir Henry Rawlinson, my father’s old friend, moved that the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society—the traveller’s *cordon bleu*—should be given to me. It was accorded me in 1884, on which occasion, as I was absent from England, Sir Arthur Phayre kindly received it for me and gave it to Colonel Yule, who took it to my father who was unable himself to attend. Up to this point they had not met, and my father, hearing only that a gentleman had called to see him, somehow took it into his head that Yule was a missionary who had called for a subscription. A very funny scene followed between the two old men, which terminated by Colonel Yule sitting down angrily—and heavily—on a favourite cat of father’s!

This, however, is anticipation. I was in London during the autumn and winter of 1882, preparing my book “Across Chrysé,” which was published in April, 1883, by Sampson Low. Meeting Sir Henry Stanley one evening at dinner at Sir Edwin Arnold’s, he gave me a piece of



advice which I ought to have taken—and didn't. "Sell the book outright for £500, if you can get it," was his advice, and under the circumstances, as I was a tyro in bookmaking and was only in England for a short time and knew nothing about publishing, this was sound advice. I did not take it, and "Across Chrysé" never brought me a penny, although it was a "gold medal" book and was translated into several languages. It was undoubtedly a very expensive book to produce, for it has thumb-nail sketches on every page and three hundred illustrations from original drawings and photographs. The preface to "Across Chrysé"—a terribly learned and ponderous affair it is—was written by Terrien de Lacouperie. When I first knew him he was a man of independent means who had collected a library and devoted himself to the study of Oriental ethnology and history. Having lost all his money by some misfortune he came to London with his wife and a few books, and establishing himself in a modest *ménage* (entirely run by his admirable wife) he made a hard fight against the most grinding poverty. Science is rarely a good pay-mistress, and he did not know how to popularise. Yule and other Orientalists were interested in him and I think he had an appointment at the London University. He was glad to write the preface (which remains an authoritative piece of work to this day) for the small sum I could afford to offer.

If "Across Chrysé" brought me no money, it was profitable in other ways. Lord Salisbury, who seldom accorded such favours to travellers but who was deeply interested in the question of railway communications, sent for me and had a long conversation in which I was much struck with his knowledge of the subject. As Lord Cranborne (when Secretary of State for India), he had sanctioned two surveys for a route between Burma and South-West China, at the instance of the mercantile community in Great Britain, but these surveys were never made, on the first occasion because the Viceroy of India

feared complications, and on the second by reason of a change of Government at home. Unfortunately for Great Britain's position in the Far East Lord Salisbury's interests, after he became Foreign Secretary, were gradually absorbed in the *maelström* of European affairs, and he became not only more cautious but indifferent towards the course of events in the Far East. The result of this later policy, which it was my task for many years to oppose with all my power, will be referred to later on.

A strange little incident happened after the dinner, already referred to, at which I met Stanley. Next morning I received a note asking me to come at once and see him at his rooms in Sackville Street, which surprised me as I had spoken very little to him. I went round and was ushered into his room by the little Somali boy who was his attendant. He was busy packing, the floor being littered with pipes, books, clothes, and weapons. I received the blunt proposition, "Would I go out to the Congo as second in command." He wanted an answer there and then, and, when I objected that he did not know me, he said, "I make up my mind about a man on the spot." Of course I was not a free agent, and told him so and that, much as I was tempted by his offer, I did not feel inclined to throw up my appointment and eleven years' service towards pension. If the India Office would "second" me I would go. They refused and I did not go, but while this was being decided he asked me to go to Paris with him to see him "smash de Brazza." This was the French Congo explorer with whom Stanley had a controversy. De Brazza had just returned from ear-marking an enormous territory for France in West Africa, and was being loaded with honours. Stanley taunted him with the slenderness of his real achievements, and called the treaty he had executed a "rag without any value." On this occasion he did not "smash" his rival who got much the better of him. Stanley was going to Paris to pulverise de Brazza in a speech at a dinner, but the latter (he was by birth

an Italian) took the wind out of his sails by coming to the dinner himself and speaking first in the most graceful and complimentary strain of his “distinguished *confrère*,” after which Stanley had the sense of the meeting against him and moderated his thunders. I admired Stanley very much at this time, but I confess I am rather glad now I did not go to the Congo for his lieutenants were not always fortunate.

Among the many men I met in London at this period none interested me more than Colborne Baber, whose brilliant description of the Grosvenor mission I have already referred to. Like many men who have lived in and studied the East he was rather eccentric in his habits. If I wanted to see him I went round to his rooms in Woburn Place about midday and found him in bed, in a large room littered with books, and an eternal cigarette between his lips. He was such a slave to the cigarette that, on occasions when he was entertaining parties including ladies to dinner in restaurants, I have known him arrange with the waiter for a pretended summons from the table, which enabled him to slip out and have a whiff or two between courses! In Spain or Russia no such excuse would have been needed, for I have seen men smoke—and expectorate—at *table d’hôte* between the courses of dinner, and that when the rooms were full of ladies.

Perhaps the proudest moment of my first little triumph was reached when I got a letter from Mr. John Macdonald of the *Times*, and was asked by him if I would go to Tongking as *Times* correspondent. The veneration in which I and all my friends held the greatest of all newspapers made it the highest honour to be chosen to represent it. The pay and allowances seemed to me princely, and for the first time in my life I had money enough and to spare. I had been given an extra six months’ leave already, and now I was “seconded”—the all-powerful *Times* was not refused when it asked for my services—and

I started off for Indo-China in the early summer of 1883. During the eight months I was at home I had also managed to address many leading Chambers of Commerce, in connection with the question of surveying a trade route from Burma to China, and was promised support by them. As a result of this Mr. Holt Hallett was sent out to make surveys of the projected line.

Before closing this chapter on my exploration of Southern China I may repeat that, thinking it over in the light of more mature knowledge, I believe that with an English interpreter I could have carried out my original plan, and completed a route which has never since been covered, and which I still believe to have had great possibilities. With our slender resources and the many things against us we were severely handicapped, but we covered some 1,300 miles of survey of new ground, and of course marched considerably more. We were practically the first unofficial explorers in Southern China, and the fact that neither of us had any previous experience of the country was much against us. The French official expedition, whose route at one point crossed ours, lost Doudart de Lagré, Garnier and de Carné, while Henri Mouhot perished in the same work of exploration in Indo-China. To their memory, and to that of my friend Charles Wahab who bore the burden and heat of the day with me but did not live to reap the reward, I dedicated my first book "Across Chrysé." I cannot close this chapter on the note of my own success when I remember how many who did more to deserve it fell by the wayside. R.I.P.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FAR EAST IN PEACE AND WAR

*L'AFFAIRE TONKINOIS* is now a matter of past history, though as I write come echoes of it in the shape of "frontier incidents" between France and China. In 1883, however, very little was known of the country and its history, and the enterprise of France in that region was a matter of bewilderment to Europe. It was to clear up some of this haze that I was sent out, and in August, 1883, I despatched home from Colombo a description and history of the country, which was the first really detailed and authentic account to reach Europe. For reasons which will appear I sent it by wire, and it constituted a record at the time, containing 8,000 words. I must mention that my agreement with the *Times* (which was no formal "agreement" but a mere verbal commission from John Macdonald) gave me *carte blanche* in the matter of expenses—entertaining being a recognised item—as well as a handsome salary which was paid into my bank in London and which I never touched till my return. I was not expected to give any account of the sums disbursed—just a statement of the monthly total. These were palmy days for the special correspondent! I owed my selection for this post not only to my exploration but to my acquaintance with Siam and Burma, and to the policy, of which I had already become the advocate, of a forward movement on our part in Indo-China to secure our predominance in Eastern Asia against the growing influence of France and Russia.

Cochin China had been occupied by France in 1862, and from this point, at the extremity of the peninsula, the

French began to nibble further and further north. Between them and Tongking, which they believed to be the key to the southern provinces of China, lay Annam (a strip along the coast) and the eastern provinces of Siam, also some independent Shan tribes. Tongking, once an independent kingdom, had been conquered by Annam in 1802 with the aid of French officers, and the French were intent on spreading their influence through the Annamese channel, disregarding the claim of China to be the suzerain of Annam. France, however, was not very whole-hearted in her colonial policy and drifted vaguely on, the period of 1870 naturally absorbing her energies at home, but in the 'eighties a strong colonial party under Jules Ferry began to work in various parts of the world, encouraged, it is believed, by Bismarck who desired to engage the activities of France outside Europe. In 1881 a large sum was spent in placing a "flotilla of observation" on the Sonkoi river to open that stream to navigation and suppress the numerous local pirates. This led to a collision with the Tonkingese, and the death of the French commander. A French expedition was promptly despatched, the new King of Annam, a mere puppet, executed a treaty (December, 1883) and the main towns of the delta were occupied.

As soon as I arrived at Haiphong, the principal town at the mouth of the delta, I determined to make arrangements by which I could get all over the country as quickly as possible. As the delta is intersected with waterways a launch was my best method, but there was only one to be had. Thanks to my credit, I was able to secure it from its owner, a well-known character, "old Roche of Saigon." I was joined by another correspondent, Gilder of the *New York Herald*, and our society was completed by an Italian skipper who drank *vermouth* all day long and fed us on sardines, macaroni and anchovies—stimulating but not very wholesome. I found the French position by no means enviable. The delta which formed their sphere of operations is of rich soil brought down by the river, which

the natives know by several names, but which is called by the Chinese the Songkoi and by the French *Fleuve Rouge*, on account of its colour. Like the delta at the mouth of the Irrawaddy, this part of Tongking is fast encroaching on the sea. Two centuries ago the Dutch and Portuguese factories at Hungyen—now thirty miles inland—were on the coast, and Hanoi, the capital, was a seaport in the eighth century. The soil is extremely fertile but the climate hot, damp and unhealthy, and I found the military hospitals of the French full to overflowing. As for the natives, the Annamese—a feeble, effeminate race, armed only with pitchforks, old rifles or sticks—had offered little opposition to the French. In Tongking the trading population was almost entirely Chinese, many of the firms being offshoots from Hong Kong, and a little higher up the river there were the Chinese pirates, or Black Flags, who offered the only really formidable resistance to the French advance. The Black Flags had originally been outlawed by the Chinese, but having been called in by the Annamese to oppose the French they fought so stoutly that the Chinese encouraged them—unofficially at first but later without disguise.

My observations in Tongking led me to several conclusions, which I will give as briefly as possible. First, the aims of France were antagonistic to British interests; second, she had got a harder nut to crack than she imagined; and thirdly, the game would not seem worth the candle to the majority of Frenchmen. Accordingly I contributed to the *Times* letters and telegrams which dispersed a good deal of the polite fiction kept up by M. Ferry and his party as to the objects of their little “punitive expedition” and its trifling character—a mere “military promenade” with no ulterior motive save obtaining redress for the death of brave Frenchmen. My difficulty was to get off my account in time to influence the debate in the French Chambers which was shortly to take place. For the purpose no brief telegram was

sufficient, but a really carefully reasoned description from the mass of first-hand material I had accumulated. I therefore took my "stuff," embarked on the first steamer leaving Hong Kong, and in the time which elapsed before we reached Colombo had written a small book on Tongking. Owing to the bad feeding and climate while on the launch I was covered with boils, and could neither sit or lie with any comfort nor leave my cabin. Plastered with poultices I sat in my sweltering cabin and worked doggedly at my task. When it was done it had to be boiled down again and, that completed, I was able at Colombo to send it at the low Indian press rates to Calcutta, where the *Times* had a lien on the wire to Europe. I have often laughed to think of the face of the telegraph operator at Colombo when I handed in my 8,000 word wire. He could hardly have been more astonished had I emulated Gordon Bennett in one of his journalistic *coups* when, desiring to retain possession of the wire for an emergency and to keep it occupied, he handed in the New Testament with directions to "go on with it."

Naturally the effect of the attitude of the *Times* was to modify the enthusiasm of the French. My own proposal for the settlement of the difficulty was the establishment of a neutral zone between the French and Chinese spheres, and the opening of the Red River to international trade. As a matter of fact the river proved, by later exploration, to be unnavigable, but the principle would have been established. Unfortunately for my scheme, China became inflated with the idea that Europe was on her side against France, and changed her demands to the whole of Tongking, the delta and the treaty ports. The French answer to this was the taking of Sontay, after two days' heavy fighting with the Black Flags, and the capture of Bacninh in March, 1884. By this time French war correspondents had arrived in shoals. Mr. (now Sir) J. G. Scott, the able author of "The Burman: his Life and Notions," went out with me as my assistant at first, but soon joined the *Daily*



*News.* He, Gilder, Cameron of the *Standard*, and myself formed a little confraternity, and we were a weather-beaten quartette; but the new arrivals turned up in spotless kit, exquisite helmets with flowing green veils, lemon-coloured kid gloves, shining cameras and heaps of note-books, field glasses and other impedimenta. We were not popular originally with French headquarters, but the arrival of our *confrères* put our noses still more out of joint, and we had to put up with a good deal of annoyance in consequence. Under the peculiar conditions of French opinion it was natural that the commanders of the expedition desired to send home only such news as should be at once reassuring and inspiring—a combination of brilliant little victories with a low mortality among the French. The difficulties at Sontay were therefore under-estimated, and at Bacninh, where the French advanced in three columns, making a converging movement, and at length “rushing” the place, they found nothing inside but a few old men, some women, and a mule or two. Yet political exigencies—not vainglory—turned this into a victory and a “capture.” Now, our business was to tell the truth and shame anyone who didn’t like it. General Négrier, who was our friend, won unpopularity by himself inclining to the belief that truth was the best policy.

It may be imagined that it was no easy task to keep in touch with French headquarters. On one occasion I had to go down to Haiphong to despatch a wire, and when I wanted to return to General Négrier I was met with a demand for my passport for headquarters. I had none, not thinking one necessary, and of course the scheme was merely got up to prevent my return. An interview (granted with much difficulty) with the commandant proved useless, and I was left kicking my heels on my launch. I tried to bribe an Annamese captain of a tug boat, going up the river with despatches, but in vain. The man was not incorruptible, but he was afraid. Presently as I sat on the deck of my launch I had an idea. A number of native

canoes with bamboo covers lay alongside the tug, and on the wharf sat the Annamite *serang*, a pirate-looking person with a venal eye. Negotiations were opened with him, and after many protestations the aforesaid eye was conveniently closed by a few dollars, and I slipped at evening into one of the canoes and hitched it on to the tug. The commandant and his staff watched the tug's departure from the bank, and from my canoe I saw their glances at my launch, where they believed me to be sitting disconsolate. We slipped merrily up stream till we were only a few miles from headquarters, and I revealed myself to the naval officer in command of the river traffic. He was very angry and said I should be sent back at once, but a friend in need appeared in the person of an Irish officer of the *Légion étrangère* who asked everyone to dinner on the spot. We all dined and became very merry and friendly, and next morning, with my Irish friend's help, I went on my way. It is a strange thing to meet one's own countrymen in a foreign army, but the *Légion étrangère* gathers up all races in its net—often they are hard cases. This man told me that his whole sympathies were with the nation under whose flag he served. From his standpoint as a Nationalist he had no good word for the English. But blood is thicker than water. We were two Celts in a foreign land, and we had that greatest of all ties—a common sense of humour. The French were scandalised with me; he was tickled. We laughed together, and he sent me on. I am afraid my subsequent behaviour must have made him regret it.

The Japanese methods of Press censorship had not yet dawned on a surprised journalistic world, but the French had a pull over us in the scarcity of means for transmitting news. We had to go down personally to Haiphong and wire thence to Hong Kong *en clair*, and nothing "inconvenient" was allowed to pass.

Under these circumstances I was obliged to resort to stratagems in order to give the *Times* the unvarnished

account which they had the right to expect, and this was the more difficult because I was already a marked man, both on account of my own opinions and the importance of my paper. In those days the *Times* was not only ahead of all other journals in its arrangements for getting news (especially from the East) but was regarded as a leader of opinion in Europe, and no Government could afford to despise or ignore its comments. It was with a full sense of my own responsibility that I faced the situation in Tongking, and as my view of the Far Eastern situation widened I became more and more convinced that the game France was playing imperilled our vital interests in the Far East. That this was the work of a small party in the French State, and that the bulk of the nation had no taste for such adventure, gave me my cue, and I therefore determined that both the French and the English nation should know the truth about Tongking. Needless to say I had the full understanding and support of the *Times*, though from first to last I was never given a "case." "Go out and tell the truth," were my only instructions, and throughout my connection with the *Times*, both in the Far East and elsewhere, I never had any other prompting than this.

My first letter about Tongking—written, of course, before war was supposed to have begun—was not viewed with favour by the colonial party in France, who pooh-poohed my assertion that their designs did not stop short at Tongking alone but extended over the southern provinces of China and Siam. Wild as this may seem, it was actually the programme of de Carné and others, the protagonists of the *Empire Indo-Chinoise*. My next offence of any moment was a letter, written on January 29th, 1884, and appearing in the *Times* of March 13th, which described the taking of Sontay. I went over the ground a few days after with a French officer who had taken part in it, and had the description from his lips. The Black Flags made a splendid resistance, and the French troops and Turcos were beaten back time after time. One of the Black Flags,

who had been told off to stand between a stockade and the city wall near a gateway, held his post, although the firing around him and the dropping shells had destroyed the masonry behind him. He stood his ground with a Winchester repeating rifle and a cartridge belt, filling and firing steadily, and dropping a man with nearly every shot. He was killed in the act of taking aim. The French, with their usual chivalry, recognised his gallantry by giving him a soldier's grave where he fell, all the other dead being heaped into one trench.

This engagement showed how the Chinese can fight, even when badly trained and led, and though it was by no means an isolated instance I have always thought it one of the most complete answers to the theory that the Chinese cannot be good soldiers. On the contrary, I believe them to be among the finest material in the world, for added to a very sturdy physique and a power of existing on scanty rations they are free from nerves and have no fear of death. Even after their rout at Sontay the Black Flags marched off in good order and were not cut off by the French.

After Sontay was taken a severe example was made of the people within it, and although this was probably done on the Russian principle that it is at once more politic and more merciful to do nothing by halves, yet the spectacle of piles of ashes, where houses full of fugitives had been burnt, and the assurance of my guide that no quarter had been given, did not seem to me edifying in view of the fact that France posed as the champion of Christianity and civilisation. As a matter of fact such a method would not succeed with the Chinese, nor do I believe it to be justified even on the ground of policy. I have seen something of war and know that it cannot be waged with kid gloves, but the method of village burning and country wasting is as wasteful as it is cruel, turns peaceful people into homeless brigands, and recoils eventually on the conqueror.

After my description of Sontay it was decreed that "no correspondent is to be allowed to see the taking of Bacninh," where an example was to be made for the intimidation of the Chinese. I managed, however, to get to General Négrier's headquarters, and with one of the columns entered the doomed village—it was little more. It was not a defensible position, being commanded by hills. I sent two brief telegrams on March 5 and 7, but they were "delayed in transmission"—in other words they were kept for the best part of a week at Haiphong. On March 14 the *Times* had a Reuter wire announcing the fall of Bachinh, and the next day appeared, in rather amusing conjunction, the official despatch of General Millot, commander-in-chief, and a wire from myself which I had sent off personally from Haiphong. Millot said "Bacninh was carried in brilliant fashion," the "combined movement" having been most successful. I said "citadel undefended; French met with but feeble resistance and suffered only trifling loss." I followed this up by a wire (March 16) saying: "The capture of Bacninh was a hollow affair, and the plan to cut off the enemy's retreat completely failed. . . . The Chinese therefore retreated to their own country." This telegram never passed the French censor. It was sent through in an innocuous form to a friend at Hong Kong, who translated it by a code already arranged, and sent it on in its revised form to the *Times*. I had to calculate its appearance carefully, so as to be out of Tongking when it was being read in Paris. My letter containing a full account of the Bacninh affair appeared in the *Times* on April 9 and justified my wire. Only boys and opium smokers were left in the town when the French "carried it in brilliant fashion." The "combined movement" was a deadly failure, owing to the muddling of the commander-in-chief, and only one of the columns (that of General Négrier) carried out its programme. No blow was inflicted on China by this hollow victory, though about a hundred were killed in desultory fighting on the

way up. It must be understood that neither then nor now have I accused the French for lack of courage or skill in war, which they have demonstrated too often to need any testimony from me; but this was a politician's war and the accounts sent home were dictated by political and party exigencies and were not acceptable to a great portion of the nation. Had General Négrier been given a free hand he could have done much better, but, as I shall show subsequently, the relations of the French commanders were far from satisfactory, and he was not a favourite, being an aristocrat by birth and breeding, while Millot was a stupid *bourgeois*, and Brière de Lisle (who had coloured blood) was a man of no military capacity. The distribution of honours after this campaign was something unprecedented. More Legions of Honour were bestowed after Bacninh than after Austerlitz! Brière de Lisle became Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour. Jules Ferry christened me "*le Francophobe enragé*."

I have one more "correspondent" story of this period. Our fraternity of three—Gilder, Cameron and myself—pledged ourselves when we left Tongking to take no advantage of each other but to despatch our telegrams simultaneously. When Gilder and I were getting into Hong Kong we missed Cameron, who had slipped over the side and gone ashore. As we made our way to the telegraph office Cameron came out, looking rather sheepish, but we greeted him blandly. Going inside I asked: "Oh, by the way, has Mr. Cameron given his message yet?" The reply was what we had expected—the clerk was just about to attend to it. "Wait a moment," I said, and at lightning speed I dashed off an epitome of my original report, and told him to send it "express" which costs treble rates but takes precedence of everything but Government despatches. The telegram in question stated that the French were now discussing the occupation of Amoy, and I added that the authorities at Haiphong would no longer forward my messages. The *Times* was able to

get this out in a second edition on the day it was despatched, and a day before Cameron's wire appeared in the *Standard*. Poor Cameron, who did splendid service for the *Standard*, and was such a keen correspondent that his temporary lapse from our bargain must not be thought too much of, lost his life, like several other distinguished correspondents, in the Soudan. The record of his work between 1880 and 1885 is an illustration of the sort of life a war correspondent led in those days. He was at the battle of Maiwand (Afghanistan) in 1880, was taken prisoner by the Boers at Majuba next year, witnessed the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882, and after a lot of less important work was killed at Abu Klea in 1885.

My friend Gilder was one of the most powerful men I ever met and had a cast-iron frame. On the Schwatka expedition, in 1878, to search for the remains of Franklin, he made a record sleigh journey—over 3,200 miles. In 1881 he was again in the Polar regions, in the search for the *Jeannette*, and after his ship (the *Rodgers*) was burnt made a mid-winter journey across Siberia from the Behring Straits. He belonged to a distinguished American literary family, and his brother was (and I think still is) editor of *Scribner's Magazine*.

From Hong Kong (as there seemed nothing special for me to do) I wired that I was coming home unless directions to stay reached me. These were actually sent, but somehow missed me, and I arrived back in London only to be sent out again at once. From this time for some months I made my headquarters at Hong Kong, living at Stonehenge, a bachelor "chummery" where lived my friend Stewart Lockhart and other kindred spirits. The chummery of the China side is both economical and extremely comfortable, thanks to the genius of the Chinese for service. Stonehenge was very hospitable, and our Sunday morning breakfasts were a great institution—the discussions were as hot as the mulligatawny soup and dry curry, and that is saying a good deal.

The Governor of Hong Kong who had succeeded Pope Hennessy was Sir George Bowen, irreverently called Sir Jaw Bone—the name was first bestowed by a malicious local editor. He was a very kind and well-intentioned man, but old-fashioned and pompous in his manner. A favourite phrase of his, which he rolled over his tongue on every possible occasion, was “Pax Bri-tan-ni-ca,” and he modelled his oratorical style on that of Mr. Gladstone, who was his first patron. His secretary was Mr. Rochfort Maguire (whom I was to meet later on), who must remember some strenuous work on despatches which had to come up to Sir George’s ideas of style and dignity. The merchant princes of the China side were still living in some of their old state, and such houses as Jardine’s kept up a magnificent hospitality on a scale impossible nowadays. The mention of Sir Jaw Bone reminds me of an old Indian story concerning the distinguished soldier and statesman Sir John Malcolm, who was also a great talker. Canning is said to have christened him Jaw Bahadur (Bahadur signifying hero or champion). On one occasion Malcolm was dining with Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General, and mentioned that he and three of his brothers had once met in India. “No, Malcolm, no. Quite impossible!” said the Governor-General. Malcolm persisted, “I assure your Excellency—” “No, no,” replied Lord Wellesley, “if four Malcolms had met we should have heard the noise all over India!”

Sir George Bowen, despite his classical quotations and pompous manner, was a man with wide experience. He was first president of the University at Corfu, and saw the revolution at Vienna in 1848, and the capture of that city by the Imperial troops. After being chief secretary of the Ionian Islands he was appointed Governor of Queensland, New Zealand, Victoria and Mauritius in succession. His wife was an Ionian lady and was very handsome. He found Hong Kong in a parlous state, and Pope Hennessy had left a legacy of ill-will between the mercantile community and the Government. The former was represented



on the legislative council by only two out of ten members, and moreover Hong Kong was not allowed to manage its own municipal affairs. Such trifling matters as the position of a culvert or the diversion of a pathway had to be referred home to the Colonial Office!

Hong Kong in those days was in one respect not the pleasant place it is now. Everyone lived on the hot sea-line or a few hundred feet up the hillside; and the Peak, now dotted over with villa residences, had only some forty houses, including "Mountain Lodge," originally intended as a sanatorium for troops, but condemned by the military authorities and made the Governor's "hill station." It was, of course, impossible to develop the Peak for residence until a hill railway was built, but only those who remember Hong Kong before this can realise the difference it has made to the health of Europeans. Of course, the Peak houses have to be built with special regard to the cold, and particularly the damp. It is necessary to have fire-places and drying-rooms for clothes. It is curious to go from the tropical heat of the town to the temperate climate of the Peak—from white clothes and *solah topees* to an overcoat and a cheery fire—in a short half-hour's journey. The gradient of the mountain railway is so steep that on passing up and down one looks out of the window to see the houses apparently hanging on to the sides of the cliff at an angle of thirty or forty degrees, in seeming defiance of the law of gravitation, while a look down below shows the buildings and walls waving and toppling about like a field of corn in a storm! It is we, of course, who are out of the perpendicular, and whose point of view changes so rapidly as to cause this optical delusion, but the effect is one not soon forgotten. A curious result to a lady of my acquaintance of coming down so rapidly was to make her quite deaf for some minutes, which she found highly inconvenient when she arrived as a stranger in the middle of a party assembled for dinner and had to guess at the nature of the remarks addressed to her!

It may be mentioned that in my letters I commented strongly on the policy which, at such a critical time, left Hong Kong (whose defences were perfectly obsolete) without the protection of a British fleet. There was a riot at Canton, a war in Tongking, and the fleet was sent for a two months' cruise round Japan and Korea!

Meanwhile *l'affaire Tonkinoise* was taking some unexpected turns. Perhaps no war between two great nations had more comic and paradoxical situations. For one thing, the fighting was going on for a year before war was declared! Then the advent to power in Peking of the "war party" led to a cessation of hostilities. A treaty was signed in hot haste by Li Hung Chang and Commandant Fournier, the latter being raised by telegram to the rank of Plenipotentiary to admit of this. The two negotiators fell into each other's arms! This *dénouement* was brought about quite "accidental like" by my friend Mr. Detring, Commissioner of Customs at Canton, since then at Tientsin. Detring is a German, and is one of the men behind the scenes who make history. We shall meet him again. In this case he met Fournier while on a passage in a French cruiser from Hong Kong to Canton. They patched the thing up between them in a few hours' talk, Fournier knowing that his principals were only too anxious for a settlement, while Detring was equally aware of the Chinese frame of mind and had considerable influence with Li Hung Chang. I was able to get the terms of this treaty in advance, and having the earliest possible notice of its signature the *Times* came out with it before the details reached Paris. Immediately after this "treaty" had been signed war broke out in earnest! Colonel Duguenne, acting under a misapprehension, advanced towards Langson and was repulsed and driven back. Many accounts were given of this incident, but the facts here summarised are the true ones. The Chinese commander said that no orders to evacuate had reached him, whereas Duguenne had been told that the treaty

provided for the occupation of the frontier towns. The collision might have been avoided but for the curious fact that the French had no proper interpreter, so that the Chinese commander's letter asking for time could not be translated. After this disaster to the French many attempts were made to patch up peace, but with no avail, yet for a time a suspension of hostilities took place.

During this truce Admiral Courbet entered the Min river, passing the forts at its mouth, and anchored inside. On the resumption of hostilities Courbet took advantage of his position to shell the arsenal at Foochow and sink the Chinese fleet. I was staying with our Vice-Consul Mr. (now Sir Pelham) Warren, close by the arsenal, and although he had had notice from the French admiral that it would be advisable to leave, he declined, in his usual imperturbable manner, to make a move. We dined and smoked comfortably, and the admiral, who did not want to shell *us*, sent several urgent messages. People who know my friend Pelham Warren will believe me when I say that he was not to be hurried, but eventually about midnight, with his eyeglass screwed firmly in his eye, he started for the quay. It was pitch dark, and we had some difficulty in getting off to the flagship of Admiral Dowell, which was there keeping an eye on the French. Next afternoon, however, when the shells began to burst we saw enough.

My telegram to the *Times* of August 23rd, written on board H.M.S. *Champion*, says: "The bombardment was a sickening business—no fight, a massacre. The Chinese fleet consisted of eleven light river and coast transports—mere toys. The French had eight heavily armed ships." The Chinese gunboats had swung with the tide and were not even able to return the fire, nor could the forts reply, since the French ships had passed them and were in their rear. When the Chinese boats sank, the French fired at the men struggling in the water. The bombardment of the town and the arsenal (which, as Li

Hung Chang bitterly reflected, was "the creation of French genius") was continued for two hours after every sign of resistance was over. I was the only newspaper correspondent present, having gone up the river with a despatch for the English admiral, and immediately firing was over I proceeded down again in a *sampan*, at some risk from the burning junks and disabled gunboats which threatened to foul us. The river was full of bodies and the scene was really a horrible one. It must, of course, be mentioned that the action of Courbet on the Min river met with little approbation from a people whose traditions of chivalry to an enemy are proverbial.

The practical result of the Franco-Chinese war was to block British trade, and, as I had already pointed out, the British merchant at Hong Kong and Shanghai was footing the bill. No distinction was made in Chinese minds between the European nations, and it was especially hard for them to understand that Great Britain was not assisting France when she saw that French ships coaled and provisioned at Hong Kong, and were provided with every facility, while Chinese coolies were actually forced to help in the work of coaling the fleet of their enemy! This was, of course, only possible because war was not, up to this point, formally declared. My predictions that Great Britain could not avoid being drawn into the complications caused by the Franco-Chinese war were amply justified, and this was the more deplorable because our influence and *prestige* in China were then at their zenith, and could we have used them properly might have led to a very different *dénouement* to what we are now contemplating.

The *Times* addressed a strong remonstrance to France on her conduct of the war, pointing out to her that Germany would not be slow to take advantage of an imbroglio in China. History repeats itself. This warning might be given to-day with even more force. The fleet, however, proceeded to Formosa, and for the autumn meeting

of the French Chamber Ferry was able to report a series of "brilliant victories." Needless to say, Admiral Courbet would not permit the presence of the *Times* correspondent. I had deputed another man, who was the correspondent of a Hong Kong paper and already on the ground, to send me what news he could from Tongking, but I was a free lance, and moved about picking up what I could, visiting Formosa very quietly in an English gunboat. The passage of the Formosa Channel is notoriously bad, and I have seen some bad weather elsewhere, but that crossing was the worst in my experience. The gunboat poked her nose into the waves and kicked her stern in the air at one moment, but more often she tossed like a helpless cork, and for all I knew might have been rolling over and over in the trough of the waves. The crew was almost incapacitated, and the captain was as sick as a dog, though he stuck to the bridge, and I, who have never known sea-sickness, was seriously discommoded by the fact that, although I had packed myself securely (as I thought) in my bunk, the rolling of the boat every now and then jerked me violently out on the floor and disturbed my slumbers. I can do without anything but sleep—sleep I must at regular intervals, and for considerable periods! On this occasion we were, as the captain assured me, nearly taking a long, last sleep at the bottom of the Formosa Channel.

Some time in October or November I heard that the French, who realised that their victories in Formosa had really very little effect on the Chinese, were planning a descent on Port Arthur. I may mention that my sources of information, both now and later, were very varied. I had friends in all camps—the mercantile community, who through their *compradores* are in close touch with Chinese feeling, the British officials at Hong Kong and Canton many of whom spoke Chinese, and last but not least the Viceroy and his many hangers-on and friends, both Chinese and European, with whom I was on intimate terms. Sometimes I even got a hint from French sources,

and altogether I was in a position to gauge the situation with considerable accuracy. Although I had doubts about the Port Arthur scheme I thought the best way to test it was to act as though I believed in it, and therefore went up at once to Chefoo and thence, by special permission of the Viceroy, I took a Chinese gunboat to Port Arthur. I was considerably surprised at what I found there. A few months before, on the conclusion of the Li-Fournier treaty, a number of French officers had visited the fortress and were kindly allowed to take photographs! Immediately after their departure, however, the defences were transformed, and although by no means the impregnable fortress of later times Port Arthur was already very strongly fortified. A German artillery officer, Major von Hannaken, had the work in charge, and took me all over it under a promise of secrecy. He told me he could hold out there, if properly provisioned, for an indefinite time, and both then and subsequently I formed the impression, strengthened by the late war, that Port Arthur is really impregnable from a strategic point of view, if defended to the utmost of its capacity. Von Hannaken, by the way, had an extraordinary escape later on, at the outbreak of the Chino-Japanese war, being on board the *Kowshing* when she was sunk by the Japanese before war had been declared. The *Kowshing* was carrying troops, and when they were struggling in the water the Japanese fired on them. Von Hannaken, a powerful swimmer, was able to reach the coast in a state of great exhaustion and escaped, but the majority of his companions perished.

Courbet could, in my opinion, have done little at Port Arthur, but as a matter of fact his Government would not let him try. They said they wished to save the *prestige* of "notre ami Li Hung Chang." It was after this that they developed their really effective policy of blocking the grain trade, and so reduced the Chinese to desire peace at any price.

At Port Arthur I made the acquaintance of the old

Chinese admiral, Ting, who afterwards lost his life in the Chino-Japanese war. With a curious premonition I wrote home "Ting, the admiral, is a fine man of bold carriage, who looks as if he would die game." This is actually what he did in the Chino-Japanese war. He took a fatal dose of opium rather than be taken prisoner when he found his gallant fight was hopeless. He had risen from the lowest rank and had little education, but he was both an honest and a brave man, one of the few fighting heroes of modern China. Like Von Tromp—who "swept the seas"—he was an old cavalry general, a strange anomaly on board ship. When I spoke of the Min tragedy, he said: "The French fired too soon,"—and after a pause and a grimace—"and the Chinese too late!" That was all. On another occasion I met "Admiral" Lang, the British naval captain who was lent to organise a Chinese fleet. Lang was obliged to return home when war was declared as he was still on the active list. He told me he had the highest opinion of the Chinese sailors, both officers and men, just as Gordon had of the army, but official corruption stultified all attempts to put the navy on an efficient basis.

The conclusion of the Franco-Chinese war was as singular as its whole conduct. A second check administered to the French troops at Langson, and the wounding of General Négrier, disheartened the French, but before this happened the Empress-Dowager, in a paroxysm of fear, had given orders for peace at any price. Before the news of Langson had reached either Peking or Paris, therefore, peace had been patched up in a most irregular way. The proper agents were, of course, the duly accredited Minister in London and Paris, Marquis Tseng, and his chancellor Halliday Macartney, but the Empress-Dowager chose to confide her fears to Sir Robert Hart, and he communicated to his agent, Mr. Campbell, then in Paris, who thereupon became the negotiator between the two Powers. Before Langson happened the treaty was practically concluded, but formal ratification had not come from Peking.

At this point M. Ferry had to meet the French Chamber with the news of the disaster at Langson, and he had two courses open to him. Either he must announce the treaty and the end of the war or he must ask for a credit to continue the operations. In the first place he would run the risk that the Empress-Dowager in the flush of victory might repudiate her irregular agents and the treaty, in which case Ferry himself would become the laughing-stock of Europe, or he would have to face the music of asking for means to prosecute an unpopular war at a moment when his personal *prestige* was at zero. He had held office for two years—longer than any President since the Empire—but the wave of political reaction was threatening, and he had the clericals against him on the one hand, because of his educational policy, and on the other the radicals and socialists who opposed the war. Faced with the two alternatives Ferry chose—and chose wrong. He demanded a credit of two hundred millions of francs for continuing the war—an entirely inadequate sum if the campaign had really been carried on. The credit was refused, the ministry resigned, and Ferry escaped through the streets filled with an angry mob anxious to lynch him or throw him into the Seine. Blowitz wrote to the *Times*: "The French when visited with affliction discover a victim. Englishmen did not overthrow the Gladstone cabinet when Khartoum fell." He attributed the movement against Ferry not only to the war but to the inevitable tendencies of the bureaucratic system. "It used to be said that every soldier had a marshal's *bâton* in his knapsack. Now that 200 ministers and under-secretaries have been used up every year every Frenchman is born with a portfolio under his arm!" The prospective minister was always attacking the present one. Clemenceau, in a famous speech, even declared: "I see before me not ministers but accused persons!"

In short, Ferry fell with the document in his pocket which might have saved his credit as far as the war was



concerned, for the Empress-Dowager never had the slightest desire to repudiate it, being seized with an attack of panic. He fell never to rise again. His fall was the result of political combinations, but to the public mind it was identified with defeat in Tonking, and at the funeral celebrations of Hippolyte Carnot (father of the President) in 1888 Ferry had to be rescued from the fury of the crowd, which called out "À bas Ferry ! à bas le Tonkinois !" Ferry was a genuine statesman, and there was no one of the same calibre to replace him. He declared proudly "Je revendique fièrement le titre de Tonkinois dont les mechants et les sots croient me faire un outrage." His opposition to Boulanger, whom he christened "the St. Armand of the café concert," accentuated his unpopularity at a time when that pinchbeck hero was the idol of the public. Ferry died in 1893.

Time brings its revenges. In 1906 the French were erecting a monument to him in the Tuileries, and his colonial policy was considered to have more than justified itself. At this juncture appeared the memoirs of General André, in which slighting reference was made to the Langson incident and to the retreat of General Négrier. A challenge was the result, and one morning the two old soldiers faced each other across a grass plot in a garden at the back of the Hotel Murat. Négrier, the figure of a French nobleman of the old *régime*, faced his adversary with supreme contempt. André had the first shot. He raises a trembling hand, fires—and misses. It is now the turn of General Négrier. Raising his hat courteously he hands his pistol to his second and remarks that he has no intention of firing, whereupon his adversary, less self-controlled, throws his hands into the air with an exclamation of rage. The honours of the day remained with Négrier, and moreover the following morning *L'Eclair* published a statement to the effect that Négrier had actually questioned the order of his superior, Brière de Lisle, as to an advance which he expected to fail. The reply came :

"The order comes from France!" after which Négrier could only go on to defeat, and was himself seriously wounded. His second in command, Colonel d'Herbinger, who ordered the retreat, was court-martialled and fully exonerated. Négrier had kept silence on the subject for twenty years, which was quite in keeping with his character as a soldier and a gentleman. This was the epilogue to the strange tragi-comedy of the Franco-Chinese war, which, as my friend the late A. Michie wrote, was in the breach of the peace a historical curiosity and in the eventual settlement a dramatic extravaganza.

It was during this period, at Tientsin, that I first met the accomplished writer from whom I have already quoted more than once. Alexander Michie was a China merchant, but he ought to have had no preoccupation but literature. As it is, he left comparatively little behind him, for his fastidious taste and sense of style did not allow him to "turn things out" in haste, like so many of us. He was Northern China correspondent to the *Times*, and wrote from time to time for *Blackwood*. Beyond a little pamphlet called "Missionaries in China," and a small book, "Overland to Siberia," he did no connected work until he had left China and settled at home. Then he edited the papers of Rutherford Alcock, one-time Minister in Tokio and Peking, and out of this biography he evolved his *magnum opus*, "The Englishman in China," a work in two thick volumes which contains the results of life-long study and shrewd and sympathetic observation. The study of British policy, or impolicy, is woven round the figure of Rutherford Alcock, and the book, although it bears signs of the strains of ill-health from which my old friend was suffering when he wrote it, is to my mind the most lucid and delightful account of European relations with the Far East ever written, quite apart from its genuine historic value.

Mr. Michie was behind the scenes in many of the incidents which he describes, being extremely intimate with Li Hung Chang and other prominent Chinese, and if the

account given by him of certain negotiations differs from the official one it is not the latter which is most likely to be correct. I do not know if I am misled by partiality, but it has always seemed to me that Mr. Michie was one of the best writers of modern English. His style is perfect in its simplicity, without a trace of effort, but full of felicities of expression. Take this about Gordon—"Gordon's legacy to mankind was not so much a catalogue of achievements as a life—immortal." There is a chapter on "Shipping" in "The Englishman in China," which is a romance in itself—the story of the evolution of the modern mail steamer from that "stately argosy, the East India-man." One sentence rises to my memory . . . "the historical American clipper of the middle of the century, beautiful to look on with her cloud of white cotton canvas, covering every ocean highway."

The sudden and unexpected death of my old friend, who was taken ill in a railway carriage, carried to a hotel, and was *in extremis* before his friends could be summoned, left a gap which cannot be filled, but he lives in the memories of many. One of the last things he wrote was an appreciation of my "Mastery of the Pacific" in the *Asiatic Quarterly*.

At Tientsin I first saw Li Hung Chang, with whom I was subsequently to have considerable intercourse. Li became such a well-known character in Europe later on that it may seem superfluous to describe him; but perhaps the very publicity which he courted helped to obscure his real character as a statesman. For a statesman I believe him to have been, and a diplomatist of high rank moreover. His policy was summed up in one word—opportunism; but when one considers the precarious condition of his country and the complications of his task, one does not feel sure that opportunism did not serve him better than some decided line of policy which would certainly have involved him in consequences which he had not the means to face. Li was as shrewd as he was well informed, and as to the

latter he had a library of European literature and an American librarian, Mr. Pethick, who was a man of considerable ability, and whose task it was to keep his master posted in all European affairs. I often went to Pethick for information and never failed to get it. Unhappily, he died shortly before Li Hung Chang, and after the death of the latter a singular "accident" befell the library and Mr. Pethick's papers, including his material for a life of Li, were all burnt.

Although "the Viceroy" (as Li was always called) was so well informed, he was by no means a supporter of "reform" in China—on the contrary, he stood for retrogression in many respects. Alexander Michie has an explanation of this anomaly which is interesting. Europe, he says, governs by physical force, China by moral force. Li, perceiving that in the contact between the two systems the Chinese must go to the wall, determined to borrow the weapons of the West with which to fight the aggressor. Accordingly he and his school ordered freely guns, ships, fortifications—I estimated their military expenditure in 1883 at some £18,000,000 sterling annually—doing this in the same way that an ignorant millionaire might hope to emulate a great violinist by purchasing a Stradivarius although he had never learnt to play. China had never learnt to use the Western tools in the Western spirit, and it is only now, after much bitter experience and a widening of the national outlook, that she is beginning to do so. The reign of moral force is over and we see the beginning of an "efficient" China. Li did not live to see it. He was too innately conservative to have approved, even if he had done so. He played the European States off, one against another, with remarkable skill, and he appreciated his country's weakness well enough to avoid, wherever he could, open ruptures with other Powers. "Agree with thine adversary quickly whiles thou art in the way" was his motto. This principle contended in him with his Chinese love for bargaining, for it was said of him that he

derived a purer pleasure in bargaining an employee (after a whole afternoon's contest) out of half a month's pay than if he had saved a province for the Empire! One proof of his real ability is found in the fact that during his long viceroyalty no missionaries were attacked in his province. This was not benevolence on the part of "*notre ami* Li Hung Chang"—it was calculation. For purposes of aggression some of the European Powers found a dead missionary worth a living army corps. Li did not wish to give opportunities of this sort.

Although I first met Li in 1883—84 I was to see more of him on subsequent visits to China, so will content myself here with an anecdote concerning him which is well known to some old "China hands," but, I think, not to the general public. This was the early days of Chinese newspaper enterprise, now so remarkable. *En passant* I find, with some complacency, that in 1883 I predicted a great future for the Chinese Press, which was then regarded with contempt by most Europeans, especially the French. Li had in Tientsin a paper of his own—a most useful organ—and for its foreign news he relied on the columns of the Shanghai English papers, paragraphs being "lifted" bodily and put into Chinese by the native editor. The work of indicating the paragraphs with a blue pencil was done by a friend of mine, and one day in haste he inadvertently marked a whole column, part of which contained a biting sarcasm on the Viceroy himself! The whole column appeared in due course, and the wrath and consternation of Li to find himself pilloried in his own paper may be imagined. Only one thing could be done. Everybody in the office was ordered to be at once decapitated—in true Duchess fashion! The real author of the mischief, who could not, of course, be touched, was at a loss how to avert the catastrophe. Detring, the indispensable, was sent for and found the Viceroy "like a crouching tiger" and not to be appeased. At last he appealed to Li to "save his face" by taking absolutely

no notice of the affair, thus giving the impression that he was impervious to criticism and found it beneath his contempt. This point of view appealed to the synthetical Chinese mind, and the staff were reprieved and returned to their labours.

The origin of the famous paragraph was the favour shown by Li to one of the most extraordinary adventurers of modern times. A man calling himself "Baron Mickiewitz" arrived in Tientsin and represented himself as the envoy of a banking syndicate in America. Without credentials, this man got an audience of the Viceroy and won his confidence to such a degree that no doubts as to his *bona fides* arose. In return for an enormous bribe the Viceroy granted Mickiewitz a concession for the construction of all railways, telegraphs and telephones throughout China, the negotiations being conducted behind the back of Detring, who was Li's confidential adviser. Mickiewitz' game was to get the written concession, which he could have sold for a big figure, but unfortunately for him the demands of the intermediary between him and Li led to a quarrel over "spoils," and in this quarrel the whole affair leaked out. Li was impeached, and the question of the credentials of "Baron Mickiewitz" was raised. It turned out that he was nothing but a valet, Polish by birth, who had borrowed the name of an old master, and by sheer audacity had nearly pulled off one of the biggest bluffs in history. Concession-hunting was a favourite sport in these days, and China was the "big game country," but very few men would have asked for "all the railways and all the telegraphs." Mickiewitz must have graduated in America—he was an incipient Rockefeller, a trust magnate in the shell. I do not know what became of him, but I think he is doing things on a large scale *somewhere*.

The Viceroy was not fortunate in his subordinates. Sheng Taotai, afterwards Director-General of Railways, was one of them. He is a man of great capacity and absolutely no principle, has more than once been impeached,

but manages to fall on his feet. An interpreter and secretary was Loh fung-loh, who had been educated at a mission and spoke English very well. He was afterwards appointed as Minister in London, on which Sir Halliday Macartney (who well understood the covert insult implied in sending a man of no rank) resigned his post, and only resumed it under strong pressure. Loh fung-loh had accompanied his patron Li on his visit to Europe, and translated his speeches into such eloquent English that he became quite a feature at banquets and other functions. His success in England undoubtedly influenced his selection for the post of Minister, but Chinese etiquette is so strict that no such reason would be intelligible in China itself, and the impression conveyed was that we were not sufficiently exalted for the presence of a high-class official! The position of Sir Halliday Macartney was a peculiar one. He began life as an army doctor, but resigned his post and entered Chinese service at the time of the Taiping rebellion. After organising local troops for Li, he was placed in charge of the arsenal at Nanking, and there he lived and worked for thirteen years. At the end of this time he was practically dismissed and was at a loose end when the friendship of the Marquis Tseng secured him a place in a mission then proceeding to London. When a Chinese legation was established in London, Macartney became a permanent official in it, first as secretary but later as chancellor. As a matter of fact, he directed the policy of the legation and exercised some influence through it on Peking. Had Marquis Tseng lived, he would probably have achieved his ambition and have gone to Paris, or some other capital, as Chinese Minister. I do not think the position of a man who takes service under a foreign flag is either enviable or admirable. Macartney adopted the Chinese service from motives of ambition, and having done so served his masters faithfully and ably. Some of his friends seem to think that the Chinese showed ingratitude, chiefly because his pecuniary reward was modest,

but such rewards are not customary in Chinese service where a man is expected to recoup himself while in office. This seems very scandalous to us now, but it was the invariable practice in our own country not so very long ago. Macartney's namesake, Lord Macartney, our first Ambassador to China (in 1792—93), earned a reputation for eccentricity by refusing to follow the practice in any of the many posts he filled. He was the first governor to leave Madras without heavy spoils. The two men of British birth—one Scottish and one Irish—who have served the Chinese best are Sir Halliday Macartney and Sir Robert Hart, and there is no doubt that both have put the interests of their adopted country first and foremost. They have been accused, not without reason, of being more Chinese than the Chinese, and in this were actuated, no doubt, by a fine sense of duty. The mischief was, especially in the case of Hart, that a school of politicians who had the interests of Britain in the Far East to guard were never able to realise this, and relied on the presence of a British I.-G. at Peking for services which could not be rendered by a servant of the Chinese Government. My personal acquaintance with Sir Robert dates from a later visit to China, and does not come within the scope of this book.

During the time I acted as *Times* correspondent in the Far East I was "seconded" from Government service for close on two years. I did a good deal of moving about, visiting Formosa, Japan several times, the Yangtze valley, and all the China and Indo-China coast ports. While China was occupied with her war with France Japan took the opportunity to question her supremacy in Korea, and thus was taken the first step towards that Japanese expansion which is to-day the most important factor in the Far East. With events in Northern China, however, it was not my province to deal, although I made it my business to be acquainted with them. I made many friends and acquaintances on "the China side," and although time



has changed much I could still go back and drop into a pleasantly familiar society—the most hospitable in the world. I found time to run down to Siam, to meet Mr. Holt Hallett, who was conducting the survey for a railway between Burma and Yunnan for which funds had been subscribed by the leading Chambers of Commerce on my initiative. Hallett also came round to see me when he had finished his survey, and accompanied me to Port Arthur and up the Yangtze valley. In the autumn of 1885 I went home, and peace was declared between France and China on November 28. Through the courtesy of the Marquis Tseng I was able to get the first information of the terms of the final treaty, by which France secured Tongking and the Sonkoi river.

The frontier zone between France and China is still a sort of no-man's-land, and serious questions have arisen in connection with it quite recently, but the entire change which has come over the East since the time of which I am writing makes the problem a very different one. In the midst of the shattered hopes and plans of other European nations the French have persisted in their slow but sure advance towards Southern China. The Red River proving unnavigable they have built a railway, which will next year reach Yunnan-fu and, if possible, will be extended to the Upper Yangtze. The policy of Jules Ferry is justified—or will be, when the rich provinces of Southern China are eventually opened to French trade.

## CHAPTER X

### A CAMPAIGN AT HOME

IT has been mentioned that during my two years' special correspondence for the *Times* I found opportunity to run down to Siam and see how Hallett was getting on with the surveys for our projected railway. During my short stay in England in 1882—83 I had addressed a number of the Chambers of Commerce on the possibilities of a trade route between Burma and China, and as a result they and the Government of Singapore subscribed £3,500 towards the survey which I, however, was not able personally to carry out. Application was made to the Government of India for another £3,500, and was supported by Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Bernard, but the application was refused. Mr. (later Sir C.) Crosthwaite, Chief Commissioner of Burmah, endeavoured to secure the sum in another quarter—from the Rangoon Port Fund—but technical difficulties stood in the way. Hallett therefore proceeded to carry out as much of the survey as possible on the sum subscribed, and it may be mentioned here that I myself paid £500 towards the expenses of the report which was subsequently issued by Hallett and myself in 1885. Hallett gave his services gratuitously, both in the field and in preparing the report, and carried out the work—1,500 miles of survey and 2,500 miles of exploration—with great ability. His surveying, which was done from the backs of elephants or from boats, was so accurate as to be specially commented on by the cartographer of the Royal Geographical Society who plotted the surveys. He said he had never seen such work before. Both Hallett and the men who accompanied

him, including the well-known American missionary, Dr. Cushing, suffered considerably from fever and other complaints, but the work was carried through with great pluck and endurance. Hallett also collected data of all kinds concerning the people of what was then an unknown region, including vocabularies of the wilder tribes, and these were passed on to Terrien de Lacouperie for his recondite studies into Indo-Chinese philology.

Perhaps it may at this point be explained exactly what our project was—a project, so ardently worked for and so profoundly believed in, which was never to be realised. Our proposed line was to start from Moulmein, on the Indian Ocean, but was to have a branch to Bangkok, on the Gulf of Siam. It was to run up the Menam valley and enter China at Ssumao, where it was hoped it would some day effect a junction with the Chinese lines, then so much discussed. The first railway in China had just been sanctioned, and great things were expected in the near future. The line thus projected was chosen because of the disadvantages of all other routes. The shortest on paper, *viâ* Bhamo, would have been considerably longer and infinitely more expensive to construct. The same objections applied to other possible (or impossible) lines, but as far as we were able to go in our surveys no such great engineering difficulties presented themselves on our route. A great feature in my scheme was the opening of Siam by railways and the advantage to be gained by linking up that country with India. The political considerations involved were, however, decisive factors in the long run. The opposition of the Government of India was due to an objection, for which there is something to be said, to promoting railway construction of which part would be in a foreign State and to assuming fresh responsibilities. In the case of Siam the increase of French influence made my project less likely to be realised. Moreover, a few years later Upper Burma was annexed by Great Britain, and it then became important

to carry a line through that territory independent of the engineering considerations which had so much influence with me. The railway system which has grown up in Burma has not, however, provided the desired connection with China, for to do so involves charging the mountain ranges at right angles. One line from Mandalay was constructed for some distance towards China, *viâ* the Kunlong Ferry (on the Salween river) but was stopped on account of the engineering difficulties encountered.

The pendulum of opinion now seems to have swung back to the old caravan route, *viâ* Bhamo. Those who decline to believe that any necessity for improved communication exists say that this road has always been enough for the exigencies of the case, and that no railway is needed at all. As a matter of fact, however, Upper Burma is entirely isolated—it is the back of beyond, out of the stream of traffic. Now that we have forced our own industrial civilisation on the Burmese peoples we must take a little thought for their future. Moreover, now that the frontier tribes have been brought under control, trading conditions have improved, and it will be a curious anomaly if, with our Indian frontier to such an extent co-terminous with that of China, there should still be no land communication between the two most populous empires in the world. A great blow to projects for effecting this communication was given by Lord Curzon in the last term of his Viceroyalty, when he declared that schemes for connecting India and China were midsummer madness—"leaping into space"! There was, however, a political reason for this disavowal, which was part of the general readjustment of the Franco-British relations taking place at that time. France, as I have already said, has gone steadily on with her line, and will win what might have been "a railway race to the Yangtze" in a walk-over. Since Lord Curzon's cold douche, however, the Burma Commissioner of Commerce has declared in an official report that communication through Burma with

South-West China is essential to the Indian trade. Looking at the question dispassionately, in the light of my wider experience, and a fuller understanding of the political and other considerations involved, I still believe the Moulmein-Ssumao line to be the best, perhaps the only practicable one. Its advantage over all other possible lines is that, starting at a point further south, it runs parallel with and not at right angles to the main mountain ranges. Next best is the route *via* Kunlong Ferry, which is probably not impracticable to modern engineering, as has been demonstrated by Major Ryder after some two years' work. The result of this renewed activity, however, will probably be a resumption of work on the Bhamo route, which, discredited by all who looked into it twenty years ago, still seems to have a strange attraction for the Government.

The reader must pardon this long dissertation on so "dry" a subject as railway lines, because of the great part this project played in my life.

My visit to Siam in 1884 had for its object the enlistment of King Chulalongkorn's support for these railway enterprises in his own country, or rather to induce him to initiate them. Not only did I propose the linking of Siam to British Burma by rail, but a portion of my great northern line was to run through Siamese territory. The king and his secretary and chancellor Prince Devawongtze were genuinely progressive, but the former was not very pleased with me for my outspoken articles in the *Times* on Siam's peril. He therefore addressed himself chiefly to Hallett, and went over the maps and plans we had prepared. I offended him again by my plain speaking. Having alluded to the strategic value of railways, he remarked loftily that Siam had no need of them, being in no danger, whereupon, with a lack of courtliness, I rejoined that France on one side and Great Britain on the other constituted perils from my point of view! Chulalongkorn was still too Oriental in his ideas to appreciate this bluntness

but I sometimes wonder if he has thought of it since. His ultimatum was that, if the Government of India would take the first step, he would follow, and as a matter of fact such a decision was wise and reasonable. Unfortunately for me and for Siam the Government of India was not prepared to accept any responsibilities or initiate any policy.

From Bangkok I wrote to the *Times*, setting forth the possibilities of railway enterprise in Siam and attacking the apathy and indifference of the Indian Government in view of the obvious designs of France on Luang Prabang and other Siamese provinces. I gave, as an instance of Indian muddling, the arrangements for telegraphic communication, which were (at Siam's ardent desire) established between that country and India. Siam wished the line to go by Moulmein, but the Indian Government had decided on a route *viâ* Tavoy although the Siamese pointed out its unhealthiness. The line was laid, three English employees died at Tavoy, and then the route was closed! I urged that railway lines in Burma, if guaranteed by Calcutta, would not be a burden on India since they would pay at once, judging from experience of lines already running. In short, I put up as good a fight as I could, and was supported by the *Times*, in the teeth of a school of Government officials whose one idea was to avoid increased responsibility, as if it were possible for an empire like ours to "avoid responsibility"! By this "put-it-off-to-the-last-moment-and-then-do-nothing line" we were being drawn into a mess in Indo-China, whereas a policy of strengthening and developing Siam, to whom would have been restored the Shan provinces which belong to her racially, would have helped to keep the balance of power in the East and have provided us with a strong and useful ally in the progressive native State of Siam. As the only idea of policy in the East at this period was to weaken and partition the native States my theories met with as little support from the forward school as they did

from the timid Indian Government, but time has proved that I was right. The present dangerous predominance of one Far Eastern Power is largely due to the action of Europe in weakening the others, and Great Britain has lost more than the rest of Europe because her aim was not territorial, and because she had the chance at one time of establishing close and friendly commercial relations with the Continental Powers of Eastern Asia and of being regarded as their friend and protector. It must not be forgotten that the policy of France in all territory which came under her wing was the exclusion of other trading Powers, so that my opposition to her advance was two-edged—political and commercial.

On my return home in 1885 my railway campaign was prosecuted with vigour. On November 15th Hallett read a report of his survey work and exploration in the Siamese Shan States before the Royal Geographical Society, after which the Marquis of Lorne as chairman, Colonel Yule and Sir Rutherford Alcock spoke in a most eulogistic way of our labours, and the chairman of the London Chamber of Commerce testified to the interest felt by the mercantile community. The president of the Manchester Chamber wrote: "In our Chamber there is a strong feeling that Mr. Colquhoun and Mr. Hallett should receive from Her Majesty's Government some recognition of the services they have rendered to the commerce of the country." I quote this because it has always been a source of pleasure to me that our efforts, however unavailing, were recognised and supported by the community in whose interests they were made. About twenty of the leading Chambers of Commerce memorialised the Government in this sense, and some of them did so two or three times, and for several years continued to repeat their memorials. The impotence of the Chambers, not only in this but in far more important matters, lay in their isolation. Had they been organised into some corporate form their voice would have been heard. As it was, the memorials were doubtless noted,

filed and pigeon-holed, and neither the Chambers, nor we, ever heard any more about the matter. As I have already said, I had the privilege of paying £500 out of my own pocket for the voluminous report which contained the results of our work, including as it did a collection of elaborate maps, surveys and diagrams.

At this time I was also busy on my second book, "Amongst the Shans," published by Field and Tuer in 1885, prefaced by the monograph on "The Cradle of the Shan Race," by Terrien de Lacouperie, to which I have already referred. Hallett wrote a historical summary, which was added at the end, and the volume is completed by a selection of Press notices regarding my work and the railway, which are curious reading to-day. I find speeches by Lord Northbrook, Sir Thomas Wade, Sir Arthur Phayre and others, but nothing either they or I had to say was more emphatic than the pronouncement of Lord Salisbury as far back as 1867, when he wrote in a despatch to the Government of India: "I am unable to concur in the reasons which allow you 'to deprecate even the probable expenditure which a preliminary survey of the country would involve.' . . . Looking at these opinions (Sir Arthur Phayre's) and bearing in mind the enormous advantages which have resulted from the establishment of communications in cases where a far smaller amount of traffic had previously existed, I retain the opinion that both in the interests of British Burma and England, this survey should be carried forward."

Perhaps I may as well give here a slight sketch of Sir Arthur Phayre—my father's old friend and mine. Even at this time, when seventy-three years of age, Phayre was a man of great stature, and had an alert and youthful figure, slim and lithe—gaunt and sinewy, he was called in his younger days. When I knew him he was remarkable for his refinement and dignity. Of course he had ruled an Oriental province—a country almost—for a long period, and the exercise of authority under such



circumstances had developed his character and left its impress. Yule wrote of him thus: "Just, humane, magnanimous, benevolent, animated by an extraordinary sense of duty, courteous, modest, I never remember an instance in which himself, or his claims, or his rights, much less his merits, made any part directly or indirectly in his words or acts—with the wisdom to build up a State, as he built up a great province. What a contemptible thing seems the oratory on which men set such value and bestow such admiring epithets—a tool as apt, and as often used, to destroy a kingdom as to build one up—beside such a combination of qualities as these!"

One of Sir Arthur Phayre's theories (amply justified by the course of events) was frequently expressed to me in conversation, and was to the effect that immigration into the empty spaces of Burma from the Shan races of Southern China would be highly beneficial, the people being closely cognate to the Burmans and a fine race, morally and physically. My own experience of them also bore out too this view. What has happened in the absence of the communication we desired? An influx of Indian coolies, who, instead of mixing with the Burmese and perpetuating a fine native race, are rapidly dispossessing the latter. The Burmese dislikes and fears the Indian, and the more so because the *chetties* (money-lenders) whose depredations have been checked in India, are spreading their nets all over Burma. There are now over a million Indians in Burma out of a total of ten millions, and many branches of trade have been entirely monopolised by them. The Indian coolie can squeeze out a Burmese by underselling, his standard of living being much lower. I think I have spoken before of the democratic basis of Burmese society. Comfort was merely a matter of degree. Some people had silk clothes and houses of teak, others had cotton clothes and houses of bamboo, but all had something. They all ate the same food, smoked the same tobacco, had the same amusements,

and mixed together freely. To them the Indian coolie was and is *Kwe kula*—"dog foreigner"—and it is one of the misfortunes of British administration that we entirely neglected to protect the Burmese, in the period of recasting their whole economic system, from a competition so unequal.

It was partly the fault of an Indian Government which persisted in regarding Burma as part of India—a view which still obtains, although it must be pretty plain to all who care to study the subject that Burma has an ethnographic and geographic individuality and might have had an independent economic future if she had only had the chance. The hopeless mistake has been the determination to make Burma an Indian province, and in the process this rich and fertile country has become the milch-cow of India. To secure uniformity all that was individual in Burma was sacrificed, and the interests of the country and the people subordinated to a desire to fit them into a highly organised and red-taped system. In the next chapter I shall give some personal experiences of Upper Burma, so that these reflections are perhaps a little premature, but they are inspired by my recollection of a time when the page was still blank, and when I, and many others, looked with eager hope for what should be written there. Believing knowledge to be the best guide, we gave ourselves to the task of learning all we could of these unexplored regions and their people, but too often our hardly-won knowledge was discounted by those in authority because of "reasons of policy," "statecraft"—bogeys made to warn off enthusiasts like ourselves.

It must not be supposed that the Burmo-Chinese railway was my only preoccupation. During my visits to Indo-China I had become imbued with the idea, of which Hallett had proofs gathered in his journeys, that the ambitions of France stretched further than Siam, and that there was every chance, unless we interfered, that we might see her establishing "a prior attachment" in

Upper Burma. Information on this head of a conclusive character afterwards reached the Indian Government through an Italian gentleman who had access, through his Burmese friends, to confidential papers and made a nice little fortune out of them on which he retired. The death in 1878 of King Mindon of Burma (a strong and progressive prince) led to the accession of Theebaw, one of his sons, who was entirely under the influence of his wife, the Supaya Lat, and her mother. I have already given some description of King Theebaw and his chief wife from people who knew both in their childhood. The King was not actually vicious, but had evil counsellors. He allowed many of the princes with their women folks and high officials to be put to death, in traditional Oriental fashion, and then proceeded to rule in the most arbitrary and inefficient manner. His outlying provinces were much disturbed and the peace of Lower Burma was threatened by the misrule on her borders. Bhamo, where I had passed in 1882, was taken by Chinese outlaws and only recaptured by the Burmese after several months. Theebaw was warned by the Indian Government, but was quite impenitent, and sent missions to other European Powers with a view to securing alliances against Britain. In exchange for promises of arms he was prepared to grant monopolies of any kind to foreign adventurers, and the French consul, M. Haas, took advantage of this frame of mind. A French bank and a French railway were among the projects, and both the Ruby Mines and the monopoly of *let pet* (pickled tea)—a most important article of food with the Burmese—were to be hypothecated to the French in return for loans. Possibly even these alarming projects or even their private information would not have spurred the Indian Government into action, but Theebaw went too far when he imposed a fine of nearly a quarter of a million sterling on the Bombay-Burma trading corporation, and refused to allow the question to be submitted to arbitration. The representative of this corporation in Burma was Mr. Annan Bryce,

whose brother (now Ambassador to the United States) was one of Gladstone's lieutenants, so that powerful Liberal interests were enlisted in favour of some decisive action. I may mention here that I knew Annan Bryce and his sisters in their home in Glasgow, where their father was principal of the High School. James, the elder brother, went up to Oxford with a bursary before my time.

From June, 1885, to January, 1886, a Conservative Government was in power, with Lord Randolph Churchill, at the zenith of his too-brief career, at the India Office. In 1884, previous to the Conservative accession to power, Lord Ripon was succeeded in India by Lord Dufferin, so there was some hope of a less invertebrate attitude at Calcutta. Lord Ripon, on his return home, could not refrain from embarrassing his successor by a series of speeches, of the "avoid responsibility at all hazards" order, being supported by Bright on the principle that "lust for territory" must not be indulged, and by Morley on similar but more statesmanlike grounds.

Churchill had attacked Lord Ripon for his supine attitude while the latter was in India, speaking of him as "lulled by the languor of the land of the lotus!" I had frequent occasions to see Lord Randolph, and often visited him in Connaught Place in the mornings, when he came down to chat with me over his coffee in a flowered dressing-gown. I gave him the benefit of all the information I had accumulated, while in the columns of the *Times* I began a strenuous campaign in which I openly advocated the annexation of Upper Burma. Perhaps I may be allowed to give a portion of a leader from the *Times* of October 10th, 1885, which explains my attitude.

"Mr. Colquhoun has always been a strong and consistent advocate for the annexation, under whatever name, of the remnants of the kingdom of Ava. He is now able to claim the chief authorities on Burmese questions as converts to his view. . . . The persistency of the Court of

Mandalay in its savagery to its subjects and the cunning of its recent attempts to produce complications between Great Britain and one of its European allies have convinced them that further English inaction would be dangerous weakness. . . . Procrastination is perilous, and Mr. Colquhoun is justified . . . his word is to be trusted when he asserts that China, as well as Siam, would not object to a British occupation of Upper Burma. French predominance in any shape at Theebaw's Court signifies to Chinese politicians another French focus of agitation and encroachment on its frontier. . . . Among the various competitors for liberty of access Great Britain is by far the least obnoxious to the Chinese mind. . . . By the time British and Siamese lines, by the routes which Mr. Colquhoun and Mr. Hallett have with such skill and courage traced, have reached the Chinese frontier the awakening of Chinese intelligence to the inevitableness of steam may have started a network of railways thither from Peking . . . its markets will be like unappropriated islands, and belong to the earliest voyager to plant his standard on them. Great Britain will, as Mr. Colquhoun urges, be shamed if any rival outstrip her. China confides in English counsels and is anxious to cement an intimacy of the two nations. Never was the time when an able English diplomatist at Peking would be more valued or more influential. Yet, as Mr. Colquhoun complains, the time has been chosen for leaving the post of British Minister unfulfilled."

The last sentence needs elucidation. Sir Harry Parkes had died in March, and in October his post was still vacant. I drew attention to this in my letters to the *Times*. On October 22nd I penned over my signature another attack on Lord Ripon, who was advocating the placing of another native prince on the throne of Theebaw, a favourite project with the "avoid responsibility" school. I pointed out that Theebaw had left alive no possible aspirant to the throne who would be accepted by the

whole people, and I deprecated very strongly Lord Ripon's action in trying to prejudice questions under consideration by the Indian Viceroy, many of which had arisen out of difficulties with which Lord Ripon himself had refused to deal. I ended by declaring that if Lord Dufferin should decide against annexation it would be on more statesmanlike grounds than those advanced by the "put-it-off-till - the - last - moment - and - then - do - nothing " school !

On October 24th, Lord Randolph, speaking in his election campaign against Bright in Birmingham, declared that Theebaw had violated trade treaties, and that if Upper Burma were not annexed not only British trade would suffer, but Lower Burma would be arrested in its development. In the same speech he attacked Mr. Gladstone's Government for permitting French ships every facility in the war against China, while Sir Charles Dilke kept on talking about the necessity of friendly relations with that Power. Out of office Sir Charles Dilke was ready to arraign a Conservative Government for not making a counter move to France in Indo-China ! This is such ancient history now that one may be permitted to recall it with the reflection that of all statesmen on the Liberal side Dilke is the one who must most often have had to swallow his convictions as to Imperial policy. In a less confused period of party politics he would have been a Tory—a Tory-democrat, like Lord Randolph. Lord Rosebery—equally difficult to tie up and label and put in a pigeon-hole—was also in favour of the expansionist policy in the East, and if anything was needed to add fuel to the fire it was supplied by the publication, early in November, of the report of the proposed French Committee on the Franco-Burmese trading treaty. Attempts were made in this to question the authority in certain provinces of Siam and Burma. They were spoken of as " far from being regularly organised kingdoms," and " the kingdoms and rights of suzerainty claimed by them are

shadowy." Thus many loopholes remained for legitimate tampering. Lower Burma was said to be a protectorate of Great Britain, whereas, as the *Times* pointed out, it was an Indian province. If politicians were divided in their opinions as to the annexation of Upper Burma there was now unanimity on the part of the experts. Sir Arthur Phayre, one of the least belligerent of men, decided that no other course was open.

Lord Dufferin had sent an ultimatum to Theebaw on October 27th, and as that prince refused the terms war was inevitable. On November 9th Lord Salisbury used language which left no doubt as to Britain being at war with Burma, and as the general election came on at the end of the month it will be seen that there had been some reason for the energy with which we had urged action upon a Government more likely to take our advice than one which would be swayed by Bright, Ripon, Morley, and the party to whom no war was ever justifiable. On November 10th I perpetrated yet another attack on Lord Ripon, and said he had always followed the policy of "put it off to the latest moment and then half-hearted interference." I think I really deserved my Burmese nickname of "Blazes," for I was always "blazing" away at someone, and at last I had overstepped the mark.

The audacity of my conduct (for I was still an engineer in the service of the Indian Government) in giving such bold advice and such severe criticism, and in carrying with me the most influential organ of public opinion, which quoted me on every occasion as *the* authority on the subject, drew down upon me the disapproval of my superiors, who administered a "warning" that I must be more guarded.

As a matter of fact I had, by my activity in the interests of the commercial community, secured a very strong backing in the industrial centres, and the Press of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Scotland were all writing in support of my views. Although I was, of course, playing as much

as I could into the hands of the Conservative Government, and was frequently consulted by Lord Randolph, I had the support of an extreme Radical like Joe Cowen, of the *Newcastle Chronicle*, who was that rare bird (in those days) the Radical Imperialist. He was under surveillance by the foreign police, having at one period fomented revolutions on the Continent, and all the revolutionary fugitives in Europe were guests under his roof and often pensioners on his bounty. Joe Cowen was a little, square-set man with a massive head, and despite the fact that he was educated at Edinburgh University he had a strong Northumbrian accent, which told against him in the House but gave him a great grip on his own people. The *Newcastle Chronicle*, a very influential paper under his guidance, yielded to none in its jealousy for Imperial honour, and so independent was Cowen that, although a Radical, he supported a Tory Government in the Russo-Turkish war and so brought down upon himself much wrath from Gladstone.

My first review article was published in the *National Review* in 1883, and others appeared in 1885. Alfred Austin, who was the first leader writer on the *Standard*, was also editor of the *National*, and I recollect that the cheques I received for these articles were signed by Arthur J. Balfour, who was then part proprietor of that publication. Other newspaper men whom I met were E. B. Iwan-Muller, then on the *Manchester Courier*, Charles Russell, of the *Glasgow Herald*, and Edmund Yates, editor of the *World*, who made me the subject of one of the weekly sketches "Celebrities at Home." This form of journalism, not so painfully overdone in those days, was largely introduced by Yates and de Blowitz, of whom the former was not at all fond.

It has been my fate to provide copy for a number of interviewers, and in return for the patience with which I have submitted to the infliction I have been described as "possessing distinctly Mongolian features" and as being



"the good-natured ruffian I looked"! On one occasion an interviewer (who appeared to be educated) asked what I ate in China. I replied, quite innocently: "Beef, mutton, fowls, eggs, rice and vegetables." He looked baffled, and then asked what was my usual method of travel in China. "Caravan as a rule," I said, getting rather bored. He seemed to find that interesting and was making eager notes, when a lady who assisted at the interview interposed: "*This* kind of caravan does *not* have a yellow body and red wheels; it is composed of mules or camels!" He had had a vision of a picturesque procession, with an old brown horse jogging along and myself *à la* gipsy, smoking a pipe on the front seat, while astonished pig-tailed crowds ran out to see me pass! *En passant*, one interviewer irritated me particularly by this sort of thing. "'Yes,' replied Mr. Colquhoun, taking a whiff of a fragrant cigarette." . . . Now, as I am not a Guardsman, drawn by Ouida, I object to that kind of "atmosphere," and as a matter of fact I don't smoke cigarettes and never did.

To get back to the *World*. It is amusing to see an old picture of oneself. I find I received the *World* interviewer in my rooms in Old Quebec Street, which contained no curios but a litter of books, instruments, maps, and papers. I was clad in an Afghan *choga*, a camel-hair gown with a hood, which had been worn by my father in the Afghan war—"had clad my father's frame"—is the exact expression. I remember the *choga*, which was old and dirty and very comfortable. I wish I knew where it has gone to, but, in the years which followed, my personal possessions were frequently reduced to the clothes I stood up in, and many of those (if my friends can be trusted) were borrowed. My father was still alive, and I can think of no more eloquent evidence of his pride in me than the fact that he had given me his *choga*. Only one thing remains of the objects described by the curious journalist—a slab of *Tali* marble, highly prized

by the Chinese, because it is veined in the similitude of mountain scenery. I was using this as a paper-weight. It hangs on my wall as I write.

Edmund Yates, of the *World*, was always very genial and kind to me. He was a big man with a Jewish-looking countenance, and was so like the late Shah that his photographs were sold in Brussels on one occasion when Nasr-ed-din was visiting that city. His father was a very versatile actor, and his mother was Miss Brunton, one of the most popular actresses of her time. Dickens was a great admirer of both, and thought more of their adaptations from his works than did many of his friends. Yates had inherited histrionic talent to the extent of being an excellent *raconteur* and a brilliant talker. Among his *collaborateurs* in the *World* were Archibald Forbes, Grenville Murray, Mrs. Lynn Linton, Labouchere, and Henry W. Lucy. The two last are, I believe, the only members of his staff still living. Yates got into great trouble by a description of Thackeray which included a reference to that writer's nose, and was not too complimentary in any way, particularly attributing to him the snobbery he chastised in others. Yates was, in fact, the pioneer of personalities in the questionable taste to which we are now so much accustomed that we hardly notice them. He always maintained that there was nothing ill-natured in his remarks, and nothing as virulent as Thackeray's own caricatures of well-known men. The committee of the Garrick Club, however, took a different view, and he was requested to apologise or to resign, and as he would not do the former he lost the *entrée* to the Garrick Club which he highly prized. He said it was Paradise and he the Peri!

Yates certainly had a biting tongue. I recollect the burlesque voice in which he used to refer at the dinner-table to de Blowitz. "Colquhoun, you have just come from Paris? Did you see our dear friend Oscar von Nowitz?" As "Blowitz" was merely a place-name this was a home

thrust. The singular and talented person who used it was born at the castle of Blowitz (Pilsen, Bohemia), and all that is certainly known of his origin is that his mother's name was Oppert, and that he had Jewish blood. He first appeared in France as a professor of German under the name of Oppert at the *lycées* of Tours and Marseilles, but was naturalised in 1870 as a French citizen and took the name of Blowitz, which he afterwards rendered famous. By degrees it developed into "de Blowitz" written *tout court* as though it were a territorial patronymic, and I really think the owner had got to believe in his own story of an ancient family and their hereditary possessions and *château* of "Blowitz." His marvellous memory gave him his chance in life. He was assistant to Laurence Oliphant, who was correspondent in Paris to the *Times*. One day Blowitz went with Delane to hear a speech of Thiers. Delane regretted that no reporter was present. On their return Blowitz went to the telegraph office and wrote the whole out from memory almost verbatim, so that to his astonishment Delane read it in the *Times* next morning.

Of course, shorthand reporting had not then reached the stage at which we see it to-day, but I feel certain that a trained memory and intelligence such as that of Blowitz, assisted by insight and imagination, could give a far juster idea of a fine speech than is gathered from the verbatim report of a mechanical shorthand writer. How often has one listened to stirring speeches which read like the baldest platitudes in cold print! On the contrary, a speaker like Lord Milner, who has no flow of eloquence at command and a delivery of studied moderation which is almost conversational, can be read with the utmost profit and pleasure, when reported actually verbatim. His speeches gain nothing from tricks of voice production, and little from that personal magnetism with which such orators as Gladstone hold their audience enhanced, and yet they are peculiarly impressive and convincing because of the force of sheer intellectuality behind them. An extraordinary

speaker was Cecil Rhodes, whose words tumbled out in a chaotic fashion, but who hammered them into shape somehow and got his effect by an exertion of will force. Personal appearance has, of course, a great deal to do with effective speaking, as considered apart from serious contributions to the literature of a subject. Such people as Count Albert Apponyi, with a fine figure and head, flashing dark eyes, flowing beard, and vibrating voice, need to be seen as well as heard to feel the effect of their oratory. In this combination of spectacular and oracular effect we Britons are handicapped by our essential unpicturesqueness. A Spaniard at any *café* can, at a moment's notice, make the most effective political oration; half-breed Spaniards in the Philippines, and Central and South Americans are no way behind their peninsular relations. The Americans are the best after-dinner speakers I have heard—Rufus Choate, Chauncey Depew, Mark Twain, and many others can make speeches of mingled neatness, finish and wit, which are more Latin than Teutonic in their inspiration. Our colonies send us some good speakers—Deakin, for instance, who bore off the honours of the last Colonial Conference. I heard him make three good speeches in one day, and he never repeated himself, and said something which sounded original each time. Dr. Parkin, of the Rhodes Scholarship Trust, is the best Canadian speaker I have heard, with a capacity for “orating” on anything at the shortest notice. I do not think, however, that any real contribution to thought or literature can be made without careful preparation, and the test is seeing the speech in cold print. No man of my generation, to my mind, stands this test as well as Lord Milner, quite apart from the views he expresses. His speeches are unaffected in language and simple in construction, but beneath this they are closely reasoned and deeply thought out.

Let me close these rambling remarks on an art which I never possessed myself by an anecdote. This happened a year ago in Prague, during a great reunion of the Slav

peoples at which representatives of Russia, Bulgaria, Servia, Montenegro, Bohemia, Moravia, and Slav communities in France and America were present, and all came prepared with speeches. Three men were enjoying the air in a public garden, seated on a bench on the Sofia Insel. They were disturbed by an individual who prowled up and down behind them, slouch hat on head, cloak thrown over his shoulder. He rolled his eyes, shook his beard, and every now and then waved his arms. In such a polyglot assemblage French was the chief medium. "Qu'est-ce que c'est—un poète?" asked one man. "Tiens—c'est un espion de Vienne!" said another, who had a sense of the dramatic. "Non!" laughed the third, "Le pauvre homme est fou!" "Messieurs," came a voice, low and suppressed but vibrating with passion. "C'est mon ma-r-ri; il prepar-r-re son discours!" And the Russian lady at the other end of the bench rose and stalked away.

I was only in England for six months, from June to December, 1885. On my way home I had visited Lord Dufferin, to whom I was charged with a mission from Li Hung Chang concerning the connection of China and India by telegraph. This was eventually carried out. I also recommended (I believe for the first time) a course which was only followed after a number of years—that Indian officers should go to Peking and Tokio to learn the languages.

When later I received the warning not to communicate so freely with the Press I felt doubtful whether I could go on as a Government servant. I am afraid that the free hand I had enjoyed as *Times* correspondent made me less and less inclined to knuckle under to any official *régime*. The independent spirit which had characterised me as a boy, and of which I had never been cured, added to a rather choleric temperament—which gained me in Burma the nickname "Blazes"—really unfitted me constitutionally for the leading-strings which are inevitable in Government

employ. I consulted Lord Randolph Churchill on the subject, and he strongly advised me to throw over the service and be a free-lance, and, despite the advantages I should have had to forego, I should probably have acted on this had I not, at this juncture, been posted to Upper Burma as Deputy Commissioner. This was not only great promotion but it took me into a congenial sphere on the outposts of the Empire, where, I thought, a man would have freedom of action and a life full of adventure and interest. Needless to say, I accepted the post, and December, 1885, saw me once more on my way to the East.

Among my most vivid recollections of this time is a visit paid by me to Bear Wood. Although I had been connected with the *Times* for over two years I had only once seen the great head of the house, and that when I had been formally presented to him by Macdonald at the *Times* office. John Walter was the greatest autocrat I had ever come across, and men who feared not kings, and to whom prime ministers were of small account, trembled before him. Sir Algernon West says of Lord Randolph Churchill that he feared only two men—Bismarck and Gladstone. I did not know these giants, but in my smaller world I feared only one! To me he represented the greatest power on earth—the chief influence on the most powerful organ of opinion of that day. No newspaper before or since has held such a position, and for fifty years the head of the reigning family which ruled over it was the man who was sitting in the landau which came to meet me at the station! My heart bumped against my ribs when I realised the honour which had been done me, for John Macdonald himself, to whom I had looked up as a sort of minor Jove, had not expected such an act of condescension. My impression is that Macdonald himself and all the staff were almost as much afraid of their great chief as I was. He was a slight, smallish man, distinguished in appearance and courtly in manner, and by his extreme

politeness, added to a somewhat abrupt way of speaking, he contrived to keep one at a distance and preserve his own superiority. I was astonished at Bear Wood, as I had not then, in my brief sojourns at home, visited any great houses, and in my experience of the magnificence and luxury of the East there was nothing to compare with the stateliness and sober comfort of an English country home. It was not a large house party—only myself and Mosely, a leader-writer who was connected with the *Times* for thirty-five years, and who was one of the most brilliant and versatile talkers I have ever heard, having a marvellous range of information. Such a quality was, of course, essential for a leader-writer in those days, when specialisation was not so usual, and when the method of publication permitted a far more studied treatment of subjects. Nowadays when a wire comes in, perhaps between nine and ten o'clock, perhaps even later, and has to be embodied in a leader which must be in the printer's hands by 11.30 p.m. for despatch by an early morning train, there is not much opportunity for carefully reasoned and erudite studies in leaders.

Even in those days, however, leader-writing was more or less a matter of habit. I recollect Mr. Buckle, the present editor of the *Times*, telling a story of Alfred Austin, who, when staying in a country house, was challenged to prove what he had boasted of, that he could write a leader on any given subject in fifty minutes. He was given a subject and sat down, and a few minutes before the time was up his copy was written, neatly divided into three paragraphs with three leading *motifs* all nicely combined at the finish—the classic form for “leaders” in this country. During my stay at Bear Wood Mr. Walter took me all over the estate himself and showed me the models for dwelling-houses for his employees and brickfields where the materials for the new offices in Printing House Square were being made. The whole thing seemed like a little self-contained world to me, and quite different to anything

I had previously seen. English country life at that time was practically a closed book to me, and it is only of recent years that I have seen something of it, as well as of life on estates in Bohemia, Hungary, and other parts of the Continent.

My relations with John Macdonald were of a very cordial character, and I esteemed him highly, as did all the *Times* employees for his upright and honourable character and his absolute devotion to the interests of the *Times*. He had risen from the position of reporter to that of leader-writer, and thence to be general manager of the *Times*. Like many other successful journalists Macdonald began by reading for the Bar, but was never called. During the Crimean War he went out to the base hospital at Scutari as dispenser of a fund the *Times* had raised for the sick and wounded, and I believe it was he who first called Miss Florence Nightingale "The Lady of the Lamp." His letters in the *Times* attracted much attention, but on his return he devoted himself rather to the business and technical side of his profession, for both of which he had considerable aptitude. His turn for mechanics was so strong that, in collaboration with the chief printer of the *Times* he invented the "Walter Printing Press," which was, I think, the first rotary machine used for printing newspapers. These machines used to be made on the premises in Printing House Square, and Macdonald loved to take his friends to see them. He always tried to keep abreast of scientific discoveries and inventions, and his cousin, Mr. J. C. Macgregor, tells me that, when the telephone was first introduced, he and Macdonald spent a whole Sunday trying to rig one up from the attics to the kitchens of his house. But Macdonald's first interest in life was the *Times*, his greatest ambition that it should continue to play worthily the great part it had hitherto filled in the destinies of the country. When the Parnell trial took place and the revelation of the Pigott forgeries shook the *prestige* of the *Times*, Macdonald received a



blow from which his spirits never rallied. He could neither speak nor think of anything else. I saw him once only under these sad circumstances and found him much altered. There is no doubt that, up to the last minute, he firmly believed in Pigott. His death in December, 1889, though actually caused by an abscess in the chest, had certainly all the appearance of being the result of the shock and subsequent depression after the Parnell trial.

[The chapters of this book relating to the Government of Burma have been read by Burmese friends, and I have great pleasure in saying that, although agreeing with me in the main, they consider that I have not done justice to the present administration, which is going considerable lengths further than its predecessors in trying to secure Burma for the Burmese. Many official posts are being filled by natives of the country, and this policy is to be progressive. The Burmese regard the present Lieutenant-Governor as their friend and protector.]

## CHAPTER XI

### IN UPPER BURMA

THE occupation of Mandalay was very easily accomplished, partly because the natives were thoroughly dissatisfied with Theebaw, and still more so with his better half, the Supaya Lat. At first our future course was undetermined, and it was quite on the cards that we might put another prince on the throne, but as time went on it was evident that no half-measures would be really satisfactory. As Lord Dufferin said, the first condition for a "buffer" State is that it should have some power of resistance—Burma was "too soft and pulpy." The first step after the deposition was to divide the country into districts and place these under the direct administration of deputy commissioners with police officers and a small staff. The districts were grouped into four divisions under "commissioners," and the head of the administration was the Chief Commissioner (usually known as the C.C.), with headquarters at Mandalay. Mandalay itself was under the control of Captain Adamson, and the chief police officer there was my friend Theo Fforde. The work accomplished by these two was little short of heroic, for theirs was the most difficult task. In the district we had dacoits to deal with, hard work and danger in covering the areas we were expected to control, but in Mandalay they had even more difficult material in an educated and semi-educated population, the remnants of the bureaucracy, and the great crowd of Court hangers-on who were thrown entirely out of a living by the abolition of the old *régime*. The judicial system had to be administered by Adamson and Fforde, and the *Times* correspondent at

Rangoon, himself an advocate, commented unfavourably upon the fact that prisoners were tried in all sorts of places—private houses, boats, anywhere that the Deputy Commissioner happened to have time to sit down—and that proper judicial forms were not observed. It is always easy to criticise in theory the work done at high pressure by the man on the spot, and no doubt the justice of these early days was rough-and-ready, but somehow or another the job was put through. Repeated attempts at incendiarism gave a great deal of trouble, a great portion of the town being destroyed on one occasion, whereby a large number of people were rendered homeless, and being out of employment, joined the dacoit bands. The hard work of these years was undoubtedly largely responsible for the heavy death-roll among the civil officers, quite apart from the number of men who fell in action. Among the former was Theo Fforde, who died in 1888, the second of my great friends who gave their lives to the cause of our empire in Indo-China.

The assistant and deputy commissioners were chosen from young men in all branches of Government service in Lower Burma, as the regular civil service was not equal to the strain. One was a civilian of only four years' standing, another had been assistant superintendent of a prison, others were recruited (like myself) from the P.W. or Public Works Department, and one or two were entire outsiders. Mr. (now Sir) J. G. Scott, for instance, was a master in the S.P.G. school, but his knowledge of Burma and the Burmese was exceptional. Fielding Hall, the author of a charming and well-known but too idealistic book on Burma, "*The Soul of a People*," was drafted in from a trading corporation. The language question was, of course, the determining factor in these appointments. The ordinary Indian civil servant (except the few already in Lower Burma) was ignorant of Burmese, and accordingly our ranks had to be filled up from men whose local knowledge was their chief qualification, and

who had no experience of administration. The powers given to these young administrators were necessarily very great. Death sentences had to be confirmed, but below that we had entire jurisdiction, and it was lucky for us and for the people we governed that we had such an admirable guide as the Indian penal code, which is a model of simplicity and efficiency, so that any man of intelligence and common sense can administer it. It was, however, a novel experience to many of us to be pitchforked into a district as big as Switzerland, with the assistance of a police officer and a few sepoy, and then to be left to our own devices. Everyone, from Sir Charles Bernard downwards, tried to do the work of three men, for each of us was administrator, judge, jury, commissioner of works and Lord High Everybody Else.

My own district, Sagain, was just below Mandalay and opposite Ava, the old capital of the Burmese kings, situated on a picturesque bend of the Irrawaddy. I had a Madras native regiment to support me, most of the time the 23rd N.I., under Colonel Poole, and later a detachment, and then the whole second battalion of the Hampshires. At first I had separate quarters and messed with the officers, but later on a building was put up of which the upper part was my residence and the lower the court-house and offices. In this bungalow I entertained several distinguished visitors, including Sir Herbert Macpherson and the Duke of Montrose. My nephew, Andrew Symington, joined me here, and a half-brother also came out to me later but could not stand the climate. It was difficult to get native clerks, as those trained in Lower Burma were, for several reasons, unsuitable for the rough-and-ready methods we now had to employ, but I was fortunate enough to secure one, a young fellow named Tun Lwin, who was of great assistance through his intelligence, industry, and honesty. Only this year I welcomed Tun Lwin to England, where he came with his family (including a grandchild) to have the boys educated in

England, and to complete eating his dinners at the Bar ! He rose steadily in the service, becoming a magistrate, and even acting as district judge and deputy commissioner, and is now qualifying as a barrister with the intention of improving his prospects, and a good career is open to one of his character and ability. I expect he looks back with some amusement to our early proceedings, which were usually held under a tree on the river bank. There sat the deputy commissioner, while the police officer, Maedermott, haled the accused before him, a few witnesses on either side protested volubly, and then down came the verdict ! This kind of procedure is, in reality, more congenial to Orientals. They prefer to have a whole day to argue and palaver, but what they particularly approve is that *Huzoor* or *Ashin-paya* (your honour, my Lord) should hear them personally and himself pronounce decision on intelligible grounds. If he is skilful in turning his sentences, they will probably applaud, even if the case goes against them. As false witness is not the exception but the rule, and the case has to be decided as far as possible on the character of the accused, justice is as likely to be secured by this primitive method as by any other, and it has the advantage of being cheap.

Dacoit hunting was, however, our principal occupation. It must be remembered that the country, even before we took it over, had got into a state of anarchy. Bands of robbers lived by terrorising the districts, and many had been in league with the *Woons* (ministers) at Mandalay, to whom they paid tribute. When Theebaw fell, his army, numbering five or six thousand at Mandalay but some seventeen thousand in all, was disbanded and allowed to go off with all arms. This mistake cost us a great deal. The disbanded men of course joined the dacoits, whose numbers swelled daily. Every princeling who had any pretensions to royal descent started a Court and went into the dacoit business. It is one of the difficulties of imposing a new civilisation on a people that hardship and

injustice cannot be avoided. A vast proportion of the Burmese bureaucracy lived on patronage and paid no taxes, while the peasantry were heavily (but irregularly) taxed. The Oriental does not object to irregular taxation, even if it is despotic, because there is always a chance that he may evade it in some way, or may get into the privileged class. We had now to spread our fine net of administration and taxation all over the country so that the biggest, as well as the smallest, fish were alike enclosed. This involved what looked like hardship and injustice to people who saw no wrong in their privileges, and had been brought up to do nothing for a living. No wonder that all these causes combined to make our early years in Upper Burma full of storm and stress.

The civil officers had, as one of their principal duties, to accompany the military expeditions in their attempts to clear out the dacoits, and now began a period of the most trying kind of warfare. Dozens of times we got information of a band within striking distance, perhaps quartered in a village, perhaps in a monastery close by. We waited till nightfall, then made a forced march—no easy thing in a roadless country largely covered with jungle. Timing ourselves to arrive at daybreak we dashed down on the village or *kyoung*, only to find the *boh* (dacoit chief) and his band had left “the evening before”! Sometimes we felt certain that the innocent villagers who surrounded us with this news were actually members of the band, but in the absence of arms, for which we searched in vain, nothing could be proved. More than once we saw the band calmly streaming out of one end of the village as we approached the other, and as our soldiers were on foot and were not so fleet as the dacoits, pursuit was useless. One day we “surprised” a village in this way, and I saw the tail of the band vanishing into the woods. I was mounted with two Burmese orderlies, and thinking to head them off I galloped round and found myself in the middle of them before I knew where I was. They had

hidden their firearms and were only carrying *dhas* (long Burmese swords), and being really taken unawares they were more in a hurry than usual. I daresay they thought my men were on my heels, so only stopped to give a slash or two at us, wounding one of the orderlies, and then they vanished into the jungle! I well remember how heartily I endorsed the remarks of a Tommy overheard while resting in a *zayat* before starting for one of our morning "surprises." "Well, wot's to happen to-day?" asked one. "Same old game," growled another. "Forty miles across country in the blarsted heat and not a b—y *poongyee* at the end of it!"

Of course these dacoit hunts were not devoid of danger, for we marched through a practically unknown country full of cover, whence a chance bullet frequently found its billet. The Burmese compared our infantry column defiling through the jungle to "a buffalo forcing his way through elephant grass"—the reeds close up behind him as he passes, and he cannot see an inch in front of his nose! Again and again captured dacoits—for we caught a few every now and then—told me with cheery frankness that we had passed close beside them. They could have picked us off had they wished, but their game was an elusive one. I remember one man saying that I had passed so close to him that by putting out his hand he could have touched me. Among my most painful recollections is that of three dacoit brothers, some of the finest looking men I have ever seen, who, being captured in arms after an amnesty had been proclaimed, had to be shot as rebels. It was my unpleasant duty to witness the execution. When the soldier advanced to blindfold them they waved him aside with a proud gesture and faced their death with eyes open and arms folded, like the *pukka* brave men they were.

It became obvious that hunting dacoits with infantry was worse than futile, and the health of the troops suffered severely. Therefore some cavalry were sent up, but being

found useless the infantry were mounted on Burmese *tats* and trained. I believe the first experiment of this sort was made by Major Penn Symons in my own district. It is interesting to remember that he got his promotion only just in time to avoid being retired on account of age. Poor Penn Symons, a most gallant officer, a splendid horseman and keen soldier, was very anxious on this account when I first knew him. He served his country gallantly for another thirteen years, and no one was more deeply mourned when he fell at Talana, at the beginning of the Boer war. His mounted infantry was very successful, and we now got to closer quarters with the dacoits and had some hot times. The Government of India chose to regard the trouble as due only to lawless bands, but a feeble but genuine national movement was also involved, and the villagers and priests, who were represented as "terrorised," were actually often in sympathy with the *bohs*. The aid given by women to the bands was one of our most serious difficulties, for we could not wage war on them, and yet they led us astray with false information, concealed arms, supplied the dacoits with food, and acted as spies and scouts. This made the pacification something more than it was officially supposed to be, and the false economy which attempted to run the country with a handful of raw officials, understaffed and not adequately supported, cost us dear in the long run. The occupation was effected by 11,000 troops, but by July, 1887, no less than 32,000 troops, apart from a large body of military police, were employed in "pacifying" the country.

The dacoits did not always run away. Where they had a good position they frequently made a determined stand, and in these engagements the civil service lost heavily, for the "politicals," being the only men who knew the people and the language, had to act the part of guides and scouts and usually led the columns. My friends St. Barbe, Robert Phayre (nephew of Sir Arthur), Perreau (whose family I



knew well in India), and many others lost their lives in the first year. Poor S——, the son of a puritanical family, was a most talented and high-principled man, but got into a scrape which nearly caused him to be dismissed the service. Neither I nor many of his friends believed S—— to be guilty, but that the charge against him was the result of his own imprudence and the ill-will of a subordinate Burmese official. Be this as it may, the story was one which gained him but a sorry welcome in his home, where he had to go during the period his case was being considered. He was reduced several steps, came back under a cloud, and a dacoit bullet found him—a tragic end to a life full of promise.

Phayre, whose wife was a sister of Augustus Margary, was another fine young fellow, the son of a family so distinguished in Burma. He was surrounded by dacoits while attacking a band and his body was actually carried away and never recovered, though a signet ring belonging to him was afterwards found in the deserted camp of a *boh*. A story with a happier ending is that concerning the district officer of Pagan who, with a young lieutenant, fifteen European and twenty-five native soldiers, was surrounded by some nine hundred dacoits early one morning. The lieutenant kept the band in play while the other men hastily laagered their carts (they were on the march) and threw up rough earthworks. This position they then held from 8.30 in the morning to 5.30 p.m., five men falling through sun-stroke. At last they thought the dacoits were weakening a little, so the thirty-five men who could still stand, though wounded and weak, actually charged with the bayonet and drove the dacoits flying! There were many such gallant actions, some of which I myself witnessed, but very few decorations, chiefly because there was seldom a field officer present to report. “The civilian officers,” the *Times* wrote, “behaved with a gallantry, a cheery courage, a fertility of resource and an indefatigable pluck

which make one proud of the British race." Some civilians got medals but I never did. Certainly I never applied for myself, but I was instrumental in obtaining them for several of my subordinates, and like other civilians I did a soldier's work in the field and should have been proud to get a soldier's reward.

In the jumble of impressions remembered—of hot and weary marches, of broken sleep and of quick confused engagements, the ping of a bullet and a falling body, the rush and slash of *dhas* and the thrust of bayonets, the empty village with a few silent bodies, the groans of wounded, and over all the fiery Eastern sky, the rank vegetation, the water we dare not take to cool our parched lips, the sudden downpours of rain that left us steaming wet—amidst all these memories specially recalled is the first time I was really under fire. I had seen fighting before, but as a non-combatant. Here we had a detachment of Hampshires commanded by Lieutenant Smith, and a small native contingent nominally led by a *subadhar* who, however, was not very keen on leading. At a turn of the jungle road we were suddenly greeted by a heavy volley which dropped several men. We found ourselves in an open valley, with a group of pagodas on the right on a raised mound and jungle on either side. The dacoits were safely ensconced in the pagodas, and our task was to rush the mound, as we could not cross the valley under their fire. Smith and his Hampshires deployed to the right and the native troops to the left, and as Smith could not be in two places at once I had to keep the *subadhar* up to the mark. My chief impression was that the *subadhar* was generally lying on his stomach behind any bit of cover while I, a much better mark for bullets, was standing up prominently behind him, and my one thought, as I kicked the line along, was that for the honour of my country *I must not lie down*, though it seemed to me not only the most desirable but the most sensible thing to do. After all, being shot was not my job! Never for a moment

did I think we should get through, and out of our little force we lost fifteen in a few moments. It was a great surprise to me when we found ourselves inside the pagoda wall with the dacoits in flight. They put up a very good fight in the teeth of our superior fire, and a considerable number lay dead. I may mention here that, just after writing this paragraph, I was reading the recollections of David Christie Murray and find that his feelings under fire were as unheroic as my own. He tells a good story of men boasting at the Savage Club of the exhilaration of being in battle, and how he stole away, discouraged at his own very different experience, and met Archibald Forbes, to whom he confided his trouble. Forbes said, "Go back to your club and tell 'em on my authority that they're all liars." From what I knew of Forbes I expect he said, "D——d liars!" Forbes had been through seventeen campaigns.

Smith and I had a number of small scrimmages together, and one which approached a real "engagement," or "show" as it is now the fashion to call it. We went out with about twenty-five mounted Hampshires, and some native troops. We wanted to get the Hampshires, who were the backbone of the force, fresh on to the ground. We made the usual forced night march, and at daybreak surprised not the enemy but ourselves by finding that a big band of dacoits was established in a village which offered peculiar advantages as a defensive post. It not only had a prickly fence all round, but the approach to it was commanded on either side by two groups of pagodas backed by jungle. With the native troops I captured one pagoda, and the Hampshires were out in the open attacking the village and losing men. I wanted to get my lot out to assist them, moving out gradually until we were in a position to rush the village simultaneously with the Hampshires. My native contingent, formed of somewhat heterogeneous up-country Indians, had behaved fairly well up to this point, but both on this occasion and others they

were handicapped by not having their own officers. I had got them behind the pagoda but couldn't get them out again! Finally, in desperation, I seized a fat and lusty Sepoy by the hair—his head was shaved except for a tuft—and held him out in front of me, outside the friendly shelter of the pagoda, where shots came whistling pretty thickly, and I swore by all the gods that I would serve every one of them thus in turn if they would not come out into the open of their own accord. Thus adjured, and with their comrade squirming and bellowing, they hastily promised to obey me and our programme was successfully carried out. We only captured the village after several hours, and when we got into it we were too exhausted to do anything but drop where we stood, having marched all night and fought for the best part of the day in that frightful, hot, damp climate.

By no means satisfied as to the method, or lack of method, we were now employing, I embodied my ideas of a more effective policy, not founded entirely on punitive military measures, in a despatch to the local government. In this I drew a parallel between Burma and La Vendée and recalled the policy of General Hoche. The *Times* of November 23, 1886, says: "Mr. Colquhoun has discovered in Thiers' account of the pacification of La Vendée an example of systematic and intelligent procedure which he thinks not unworthy of the attention of men engaged in a similar task in Burma. Sir Frederick Roberts has published the document in the Mandalay supplement of the official Gazette." The same parallel had occurred to Roberts himself in India, though I did not know this at the time, and I believe he had written a despatch on the subject. The general plan advised, which was actually adopted in principle by General White, was to cover the country with military posts and flying columns, disarming the population as far as possible, and (the most important points in my judgment) pushing on roads and other communications and making a direct

appeal to the *poongyes* (the prototypes of the Vendéan *curés*) through whose influence alone we could hope to conciliate the people. Roberts paid a visit to the *Thathanabaing* (archbishop) with a large body of officers, including, if I remember aright, six generals. "I have four words to say, and I wish you to take them as principles of your government," said the head of the Buddhist church. "They are *myitta* (love), *garuna* (mercy), *mudita* (beneficence), *upayka* (discrimination and moderation)." Throughout the recent South African war I traced with deep interest an extraordinary resemblance to this period in Burma, and especially in the part played by the women and *predikants*. In Sagain we had made some forty miles of road and many more of tracks through the jungle, which made the operations of the mounted infantry possible.

After about eighteen months I went down with fever and was taken to Rangoon by the river steamer, being carried on board in a state of delirium. After two or three days at sea I felt a different being, and although I have suffered from fever both before and since I have always found the sea a sure specific. My short holiday at home was not altogether idle. On August 11th I sent a letter to the *Times* over my own signature, and as this letter was fraught with considerable consequences a portion of it is given here. On my arrival in Burma I had been asked by Sir Charles Bernard not to correspond with the *Times*, and the promise then given had been kept. The Government of India had been deeply nettled by the criticisms of the *Times* correspondent in Rangoon, but with these I had had nothing to do ; indeed, there was no time for writing. My friend Hallett had written to the *Times* disputing the justice of the criticisms, which is a pretty good proof that I was not the source of the information on which they were based. When I returned home, however, it did not occur to me that an article over my own signature would be open to the same objection

as anonymous correspondence, and accordingly I wrote as follows:

“CLYNDER, GARELOCH, N.B.

“August 8th.

“The present condition of the people is this—their villages have been looted and in many cases burnt down, they have lost through dacoity a large proportion of their cattle, and a considerable section of the population possess no means of livelihood.

“How has this come about?

“When we occupied Upper Burma we found, owing to the misrule during the reign of the late King Theebaw, an organised system of dacoity spread like a network over the whole country, in which nearly all the officialdom was interested, from the village *thugye*, or headman, to the *woon* or governor, from the governor to the ministers at Mandalay. The natural difficulties of the situation were aggravated by the issue of arms to so-called auxiliaries and by the disbandment of the soldiery who had surrendered, thereby strengthening the dacoity movement by arms, ammunition, and ex-soldiery. Most of the ministers and governors secretly supported the disorders, doing their best to make the dacoity or brigandage assume in some degree the form of a national or patriotic insurrection. It was found necessary to break up the old civil administration before we had the necessary administrative machinery to replace it by, and as a consequence the native district officials, village headmen, and villagers generally, where outside the circle of our protection, were compelled to side more or less actively with the dacoits. The principal source of revenue to the dacoits from first to last has been that derived from cattle lifting, the cattle being sold on the riverine markets or converted into hides for export. The swiftness with which a body of dacoits execute one of their cattle raids is something marvellous. A march of thirty miles is made, the village attacked (resistance being very seldom offered), a herd of cattle being driven off so rapidly that next day, when the district officer and his police try to track the culprits, it is found very hard to find any trace of them—they have melted away in various directions throughout the jungles. They have come and gone, like shadows. The result of this continual cattle raiding has been a very great decrease in the number of cattle throughout the country, in some tracts almost amounting to total denudation. The serious consequences from this are very difficult for a people like ourselves to realise, for in Upper as in Lower Burma the people are almost entirely agricultural. Cattle, therefore, are an absolute necessity for their agriculture and transport. Not only has dacoity thus decreased the number of cattle, but the military operations have aggravated the difficulty owing to the number of cattle purchased and used up for transport and other purposes. The result is that the existing number

of cattle is insufficient for the cultivation of the fields during the rains and for transport purposes during the dry weather.

"Apart from the loss of cattle there is, most unfortunately, also a serious scarcity of food owing to the failure of the rains last year in the low-lying lands. In parts of my own, the Sagain, district I found the people suffering from want of food, a considerable number of them actually living on grass-seeds. Roads and tracks cleared through the jungles were put in hand, and I took steps for paying the people in rice as well as money. Throughout Upper Burma such tracks have been carried out, to facilitate military and police movements and provide employment, and with the most beneficial effects. Over 300 miles of jungle-cleared tracks and 40 miles of bridged roadway were carried out in my own district. Wherever these works were started, and in proportion to their extent, I found that the local dacoity movement lost strength and declined.

"Under ordinary circumstances we must expect for many years to come a considerable amount of dacoity. But the present condition of the people is exceptional. They have lost their old, and only, means of livelihood, and until that is restored we must expect not merely the ordinary dacoity incidental to Burman life, but must expect that want will drive a large section of the people—ordinarily peaceable, order-loving folk—to find in dacoity a means of living. We are endeavouring to restore and maintain order, but in order to accomplish this we must first give to the people the means of providing themselves with cattle and thus regaining their only means of subsistence. Every officer of standing, civil or military, whom I met in Upper Burma was greatly impressed with the value of the country and the necessity for communications. Among these were Sir Frederick Roberts, Sir G. White, the late Sir H. Macpherson, Sir Charles Bernard. Mr. Crosthwaite, the present C.C., is known to be an ardent advocate of communications. These would be much more vigorously pressed forward but for the restriction placed upon the local government owing to the financial difficulties presenting themselves to the Government of India."

Reference was then made to the policy of Wade in the Highlands (1726—33), a country similar in many respects to Upper Burma, and I quoted the opinion of Macpherson, who unfortunately died after a few weeks in the country, that "each railway made in Burma will be more effective than an army corps." Macpherson came to visit me in my district, and I had long conversations with him as to the conduct of operations. Had he lived my future might have taken a different turn. My advocacy of railway construction

was grounded not only on the military necessity but on the usefulness of such works, employing the natives and getting them used to our administration, while I was able to point to the financial success of lines previously built in Lower Burma as a proof that they would not be a burden on the State. In conclusion I said, "Unless we provide the people with means of employment in the shape of public works, until they are again in a position to pursue their agricultural pursuits, we must be prepared for a very serious degree of disturbance quite apart from the ordinary dacoity. Burma is a country with a great future before it, but that future will never be assured until it is possessed of an effective system of internal communications."

Now, although this letter certainly aimed at "egging on" the Indian Government in the path which they had already recognised as the right one, it was not intended to contain any improper criticism, nor does it appear to me to-day that it is objectionable. On my return to Burma, however, I found a letter from Mr. (now Lord) Macdonnell from Simla awaiting me in which he conveyed "a friendly warning that I had transgressed one of the standing rules of the public service by criticising the action of the Government and making use for that purpose of information acquired in the exercise of official duties." The points of objection specially raised were that I had "fallen foul" of General Prendergast, and that I had implied a difference of opinion between the Chief Commissioner of Burma and the Government of India. As for the first, I had certainly deplored the disbanding with their arms of Theebaw's troops (a course strongly deprecated by his successor, Sir G. White), but as to the second the implication was so subtle as to escape my own observation. Macdonnell ended with a pleasant reference to my "excursions into the fields of pure literature" which, he assured me, were by no means displeasing to the Government, and he mentioned with approval my article on Burma for the last *Asiatic Quarterly*. It was perfectly obvious, therefore, that



I was not expected to refrain from writing but merely that I was to "prophesy smooth things." With my usual carelessness in such matters, I had no copy of my *Times* letter at hand when I received Macdonnell's warning, but I replied, regretting that I should have created the impression that I was criticising and falling foul of my superiors, and explaining that my main object had been to show the public at home the difficulties that had to be contended with, so as to reconcile them to the prolongation of necessary expenditure and thus avert the impatience and dissatisfaction with our "little war" in Burma which I noted on my return to England. The fact that I signed my name to the letter was a clear proof that I had not intended to violate any rules.

After this incident I returned to my district, and the pacification went on slowly but surely. I was presently sent up to the Ruby Mines district, a broken highland region at an average height of 4,000 feet, whose centre is some sixty miles inland from the Irrawaddy river. Geographically it is part of the Shan plateau and is a mass of hills running north and south. The mining population of Mogok, the chief town, had always been noted for its turbulence, and the district itself, accessible only by mountain tracks, was a difficult and dangerous one. The mines had been taken over just after the annexation by a syndicate, with Mr. Streeter (the well-known Bond Street jeweller) at the head. Shortly afterwards the Ruby Mines Company was formed, of which my late friend, Sir Lepel Griffin, was chairman, but a combination of heavy working expenses and the speculation which is so difficult to control militated against its success. Under Burmese rule illicit ruby dealing, or even illegal possession of a ruby, could be punished with death, but under our rule an imprisonment of a few days was the only deterrent, while that depended on proof that the ruby was irregularly obtained, and such proof was difficult to secure. At one time the company desired

to form a "compound" for their workers on the Kimberley pattern, but the Government of India very properly resisted this. A well-known character in my day—he may still be living—was the trader Maung Hmat, called the "King of Mogok," an immensely wealthy man whose dealings in rubies, both legitimate and otherwise, were very extensive. Maung Hmat was one of our friends who was always supremely innocent about dacoits. No information ever came *his* way, and he was always surprised at their depredations. I have no doubt they subsidised him, and probably he also subsidised them—such an arrangement would have been by no means unusual. Perhaps as an expiation for his misdeeds, Maung Hmat, who was a pious Buddhist, performed many "works of merit," building bridges, rest-houses and monasteries with his ill-gotten wealth—"fire insurance," as the witty American called it.

At Mogok I lived in a pleasant bungalow on the top of a hill by myself, and our society consisted of a military-police officer, Lieutenant Anderson, a civil police officer, Richardson (still alive in Burma, I think), Mr. Atlay, the company's agent, and occasionally a forest officer. We had some Indian military police but no regular troops, until the end of 1888. The Ruby Mines valley was kept fairly quiet but the neighbouring Shan State of Momeit, over which I had political control, was in a disturbed condition, and it became necessary to send an expedition there to defend that town and prevent incursions into our own district. Momeit (the capital of the State of that name and residence of the *Tsawbwa* or chief) was a small stockaded town, and I feared it might fall into the hands of Saw Yannaing, a notorious *boh*, and enable him to seize food supplies and arms and control an avenue of communication of some importance. I went there myself with a few Burmese and nine military police (four of whom fell ill) and was there from December 29 till January 3. I then asked for some troops to garrison Momeit and receiving these from Mandalay took up Lieutenant Nugent

and thirty of the Hampshire regiment and left them with express directions, both verbally and in writing, to *garrison the town*. I also sent Anderson to act as intelligence officer and to give Nugent the benefit of his great local knowledge and experience. Presently, however, when Anderson was out reconnoitring, Nugent got news of a dacoit band raiding villages in the neighbourhood, and being young and full of pluck he decided to sally out and take the offensive. He found the dacoits strongly stockaded. I afterwards visited the spot and, with my own limited military knowledge, should have deemed it madness to attack with such a force. In the first assault he lost a man, had six wounded, and was wounded himself. Instead of withdrawing he made another attempt and received a fatal wound. His sergeant, Beer, took over command and, as a proof of the temerity to which Nugent sacrificed his life, his subordinate was able to withdraw without further casualties and to carry back to Momeit both the dead and the wounded men as well as the body of the lieutenant. This happened on January 14, 1889.

On getting this news, I at once went up with some more troops to Momeit, where Sergeant Beer was holding the town, and with Anderson went out to engage the band and wipe out the impression of the check we had received. This was done promptly and effectually on January 19, I had already wired the news to the Chief Commissioner, and asked for more troops. His answer, dated January 19, was to the effect that I had no business to be undertaking operations outside Momeit, since the defence of that town was my only duty. He said he was sending the troops I had asked for, but it was "very inconvenient," as he had a great deal on hand, and he hoped there would be no more "ill-considered enterprises."

Of course I had a complete answer to this censure in the orders originally received from him, and in those I had given to Lieutenant Nugent, which were extant in writing,

as well as being known to other officers. I was, however, considerably nettled by the tone of the C. C.'s despatch, especially as I had been given no information as to the movements of certain Gurkha troops in my district, and was quite unaware that events made any movement on my part "inconvenient." Moreover in the C. C.'s letter I was told (for the first time) that I might have safely left Saw Yannaing alone to be dealt with later on by Lieutenant —, a young political officer, who had just been sent up to the Shan States. Now, I had had no information about — and his movements, except from non-official sources, and I was annoyed that such a post should have been entrusted to a man with so little experience, who moreover did not communicate with my own Commissioner (of the northern districts) but worked direct with the C. C., so that we were kept completely in the dark as to his intentions.

Before I was able to reply to the C. C. I had received from Mandalay a copy of an article in the *Mandalay Herald* of January 22, containing an account of Nugent's death and an attack on my conduct in the affair. I was represented as leaving the poor boy to meet his death while removing myself to a place of safety. The libel was widely circulated and credited without any contradiction on the part of the local government, and the *Herald* itself, rightly or wrongly, was usually believed to be "inspired." One of the charges against me was that I left Nugent without the assistance of a civil officer with knowledge of the country and language, but as a matter of fact I had sent up to him, immediately I returned to Mogok, Lieutenant Anderson (battalion commandant of the military police), who was exceptionally qualified in both ways, and who was only temporarily absent on reconnaissance when Nugent made his ill-advised sortie. The fact that I had nothing to blame myself with did not, as it should have done, mitigate the rage with which I read the article and the C. C.'s letter to me of January 19

(written on receipt of telegraphic news only), in which he plainly took the view that the disaster was due to my having acted not only without orders but blunderingly.

Under the sense of injustice, and in the irritation natural to a man of my temperament (I was not called "Blazes" for nothing) I wired at once to Mr. Moylan, a barrister at Rangoon, requesting him to take proceedings to clear me of the imputations of the *Mandalay Herald*. My telegrams gave information of the movements of dacoits which had, as I believed, been kept in check by my action in garrisoning Momeit. That this was perfectly unnecessary I see now, since I had distinct orders to occupy Momeit and had no need to justify myself on that score, but I was biassed in my action by a desire, natural but not prudent, not only to prove that I was in the right but to show that my superiors had under-estimated the position. My telegrams were followed up by a letter to Mr. Moylan—the most important letter I ever wrote. It is dated Mogok, January 30th, 1889. The crux of the situation lay in the fact that Mr. Moylan, my private friend and legal adviser in this case, was also the correspondent to the *Times*. It will be remembered that he had been pretty free with his strictures on the Government, and efforts to secure his recall had been unsuccessfully made. It was a part of my general indiscretion that I chose this particular man as my adviser and confidant at this moment.

Here is my letter, practically verbatim, with the omission of a few names:—

“MOGOK, 30.1.1889.

“MY DEAR MOYLAN,

“Yours of 18th to hand, returning letter from Mr. Walter and Macgregor. I guessed that the reference to A. P. Macdonnell should have been as you explain. I am glad he is likely to come, and that he is an intimate friend of yours. —’s management of the N. S. States is a scandal. He works direct with the C. C.; Hildebrand and Col. Strover are quite ignored. Fancy the political

charge of all the Northern States, with a population of some 2,000,000 people and relations with the Chinese frontier, entrusted to a young lieutenant. They require an experienced man, the best to be had, say Hildebrand or Parrott. When reference is made to this by you or Hannay see that information cannot be traced to me. I write to Macdonald to say, *re* appointment of Symes, also *re* Thirkell White's late acting appointment, which doubtless means he will soon again be acting as a commissioner, the insurrection in the Yaw was a bad business, and from what one hears Eyre was badly treated.

"I wired to you for advice as to an article in 22nd issue of *Mandalay Herald*. I enclose you copies of correspondence between myself and the C. C. (private) which will show you how I have been treated in this matter."

Then follows an account of the Momeit affair and its sequel, whereby I was rendered helpless in the face of dacoit raids by the order that I must apply for permission for every move to my Commissioner. The necessary delay made action futile. I went on: "You can judge from this the encouragement received by me for acting promptly and *successfully*" (referring to the reprisals after Nugent's death on January 19th). I go on with a few more comments on — in the N. S. States: "Even with a good man trouble will come; how much more with a green, self-sufficient lad in charge! — is 'Sir Oracle' with the C. C. . . . The whole N.-E. frontier should be strengthened, and we should meddle as little as possible with Chins, Kachins, and other hill tribes, and not allow ourselves to be led into expeditions in the most difficult hill country.

"Yours very truly,

A. R. COLQUHOUN."

"P.S.—The proposed establishment of a post at Lashio under —, with a few hundred raw military police (newly enlisted) is a veritable piece of madness. It would be twelve days beyond our outposts, and no communications kept up!

"A. R. C."

Now this letter, with its outspoken criticism of the policy pursued by my superior officers, and containing more inflammatory material than even appears on the surface, was not destined to reach the person to whom it was addressed. On the same day I wrote a "semi-official" to the C. C. at Mandalay, and I am convinced that both letters were enclosed and superscribed aright. But when the C. C. opened the one to him out fell the other without an envelope. He picked it up and began to read it, and having begun went on to the end. It is just conceivable that until he got to the second sentence he might have imagined the letter to be enclosed for his perusal, though only if he had neglected to read the semi-official with which it came. After the first two sentences, however, no doubt could have remained as to the private character of the letter, and when the second paragraph was reached it became apparent that this was that most privileged and private of communications—a man's instructions to his lawyer. The C. C. read to the end.

He does not appear to have suffered from any great indecision as to the line to take, for, on February 4th, through his secretary, he wrote to me recounting the circumstance by which my letter to Moylan had come into his hands, and adding that "he has no desire to take advantage of an accident, though he considers the disloyalty and treachery evidenced in your letter deserves little consideration." Having thus delivered himself of a generous sentiment, he went on: "It is, however, a matter of public importance that officers should act honestly and loyally towards their Government and that Government should know the character of the men serving under it, and therefore your letter . . . has been submitted to His Excellency the Viceroy." The "disloyalty and treachery" with which I was charged could not, of course, have been committed in a private communication, so the point was to demonstrate that I had broken not only the ordinary

regulations but my express promise by making communications for publication to the Press.

The reader will observe that I was not given any opportunity for explanation or protest before my case was sent up to the highest tribunal, and this although the mere fact of such an action being taken by my superior officer would certainly damp my prospects, and might even "break" me altogether. My only protest at first—for I had not even a copy of the incriminating letter and, as it had been dashed off in a hurry, remembered little about it—was that a private letter should be regarded as privileged. As a matter of fact, while the privacy of the letter might have influenced the C. C. not to read it, there were portions of it—especially the remarks about —— in the Northern States and the request that information should not be traced to me—which could neither be excused nor explained away. I see this more clearly now than I did at the time.

The qualifying and mitigating circumstances, however, which the C. C. did not take into account, and which were never officially presented to the Indian Government and could not, therefore, be expected to influence their judgment, were of a twofold character. First, I was acting in a moment of passion and under a strong sense of grievance about the Momeit affair. This might have been allowed as some slight palliation for the bitterness of my comments. The two things were closely connected, though the connection was not plain to the Indian Government. Then my offence against the regulations in supplying the Press with information had been condoned in principle by the C. C., and it was notorious that both military and civil officials in Burma were in the habit of communicating items of news. Moreover, I had some right to consider myself specially absolved from this rule, and from the promise I had made to Sir Charles Bernard, since I had received from the C. C. himself (Sir Charles



Bernard's successor) a request, first through my Commissioner and then in writing, that I would contribute some views on Burma to the *Times*. I sent him the draft for an article, but it was not quite what he wanted. Here is the letter he wrote me on February 29th, 1888 :—

“MY DEAR COLQUHOUN,—

“I have had this article by me for a long time. . . . I was afraid to let you write about the Judicial Commissioner for fear of your damaging yourself and me. I think, while I am in correspondence with the authorities on the subject, an article like yours . . . would probably do mischief. I am sure it would be supposed that I inspired it, with a view to bringing pressure to bear, and it would damage my influence. Could you not remodel the last part? . . .” And a sketch follows of the points the C. C. desired to have made. He ended by saying: “If you take this line and make no reference to me at all, or to my opinions or views, there will be no harm but good.”

I may add that the article as proposed was never written by me, for I was not by any means prepared to use my position with the *Times* for the dissemination of official views. Now had this letter been also submitted to the Government of India they might have been able to take a more lenient view of my technical offence in contravening the regulations and my moral offence in breaking my promise to Sir Charles Bernard. Circumstances into which it is now unnecessary to enter prevented my using this letter as a *pièce justificative*, but it was published in the Press of India after my case was decided.

In my defence I was able, however, to plead that I had only once, and that at the C. C.'s request (prior to the letter of January 30) communicated *anything* to the Press. This was not the view put forward by the C. C. He chose to declare that I was in the habit of supplying Moylan with information for use in the *Times*, and found in the most innocent of my sentences food for suspicion. Thus,

in the incriminating letter I acknowledged the receipt of letters from "Mr. Walter" and "Macgregor," and spoke of writing to Macdonald "*re* appointment of Symes also *re* Thirkell White's late acting appointment." My correspondents were, of course, the proprietor, Calcutta correspondent, and manager of the *Times*, but my letters to them—all personal friends—had been of the most unobjectionable character, though the last one certainly contained some news and comments, not necessarily for publication. It was of course intolerable that private correspondence should have been suspect in this way, and ridiculous too. Mr. Walter, for instance, was as likely to correspond with me on Indian affairs as the Queen! My opinion of a subordinate fellow-official, though expressed in terms unflattering to those who appointed him, could not really be construed into high treason, but a great deal was made, and still more implied, as to these communications with newspaper friends, and also as to the telegrams I mentioned that I had sent to Moylan about movements around Momeit.

As a matter of fact, however, it was of little consequence what was the degree of my crime, for if the C. C. chose to regard it as sufficiently serious to send up to Calcutta, and if he was not prepared to advance or allow mitigating circumstances, the Government of India, seeing that I had contravened rules and regulations, were bound to punish me.

Under the shadow of this affair I was suspended and went home, while my case was under consideration. On my way down, at Rangoon (July, 1889), I chanced on a copy of the *Standard* with a notice of the Momeit affair which perpetuated the slur cast on me. I may mention that the view taken of my conduct on this occasion by the C. C. (in the light of my imprudent letter) and communicated officially to the Government of India in July, 1889, was certainly not calculated to dispel any false impression. This document (which was not communicated to me till a

fortnight later) is written in such a tone of disparagement and grudging praise (where the latter cannot be withheld) as to suggest that I was an extremely *mauvais sujet* and of little use or value. As I was already in the hands of the Government on another count I did not think this generous. I was represented as a foolish and ignorant alarmist, sending in telegrams based on insufficient information. This was an attack on my ability and judgment which I do not think my record justified, and which could only have been introduced with one idea—to damage my reputation with the Government, to whom my name was already known as a promising and zealous officer with eighteen years' good service. Nor was it supported by any facts, except that some of my information had turned out to be incorrect in detail. To be fair it should have been stated that in the condition of affairs in my very difficult district it was impossible to form an exact estimate as to the accuracy of my judgment. In reality we were all considerably in the dark about happenings in that frontier region, and I had certainly never demanded troops without being justified in the event, being by no means either nervous or devoid of initiative. After criticising my information and reports the C. C. acknowledged that I was "not to blame" for sending the detachment of Hampshires to Momeit (which he had expressly authorised me to do), but he added he "could not acquit me of want of judgment in leaving it there without some experienced officer . . . to guide the young officer in command." I "should not have sent Lieutenant Anderson away from Momeit to reconnoitre in the direction of Binbong." The action taken against the gang which killed Lieutenant Nugent was "prompt and well directed, and both Lieutenant Anderson, who led the attack, and Mr. Colquhoun, who furnished *some of the information* . . . are deserving credit." (The italics are mine.)

The last "faint praise which damns" I owed to the generous report of Anderson, who said the success of the

expedition was due to my excellent information, and who acknowledged, moreover, the active assistance I had rendered. As a matter of fact, I risked my life, to obtain news and carry out the reprisals, as I had on a previous occasion when I held Momeit with nine native police for five days. It will be noted that, despite the facts, I was blamed for "leaving Nugent alone," and it was never mentioned that I had left him with directions to garrison Momeit and not to make expeditions. I had, as I have said, given him the best adviser I could in the person of Lieutenant Anderson. He chose to go out at a moment when the latter was away on a reconnaissance, but it was surely too much to expect of my forethought that I should have forbidden Anderson to leave Momeit for a minute for fear of Nugent acting independently, especially as the former was Nugent's military senior and a police officer thoroughly well acquainted with the district, language and people, whose business it was to reconnoitre.

I had never been asked for an explanation, or given a chance of defending myself, but on seeing the account in the *Standard* I wrote to the C. C. a full account of the affair, and asked that it should be forwarded to the Government of India. This was done, but my own statement was accompanied by the despatch already quoted, "crabbing" my services and wholly ignoring my line of defence as to the orders given by me to Nugent. A second despatch from the C. C. to the Indian Government was never communicated to me. However, on my request that I should be "exonerated from the blame publicly attached to me by the local government," that concession was eventually secured. On November 26, 1889, ten months after the libel in the *Mandalay Herald*, I was officially notified that I was "absolved from responsibility" in the Momeit affair and the death of Lieutenant Nugent. That there should have been any question in the matter was extraordinary under the circumstances, for I was not Nugent's commanding officer, and both I and he

were carrying out orders in garrisoning Momeit, while I had no control over his subsequent action beyond giving directions which he disobeyed. There was never any question as to the accuracy of the account given by me, and I could have produced plenty of witnesses to prove it, had any been raised.

The affair of the letter dragged on till the following March. My actual offence was aggravated, I was told, by my persisting in stating that the offending letter was a private one in a separate envelope. On cooler reflection, I really do not think that it can have reached the C. C. separately enclosed. The postmaster on the riverside station of my district was an Eurasian on whom I had had to report confidentially a short time before, and this report was by no means favourable, as he was an ex-convict under an assumed name. I now think it probable that this man was in the habit of sampling the correspondence, and he may have seen my report and had a grudge against me which induced him to open the two letters of January 30 and tamper with their contents. What trifles at times turn the scales of fate! A little sealing-wax might have altered the whole course of my career. I might have stayed in Burma and have risen in time to a seat on the India Council, with a portly figure and a liver! I might have been planted out in the land which received the bones of so many of my friends. But we had few luxuries at Mogok and were "out of" sealing wax. *Kismet!*

The moral is that one cannot be too careful about letters! One journalist of whom I have heard doubled the parts of correspondent to a sporting "rag" and writer on an evangelistic religious weekly. He put *his* contributions into the wrong envelopes, and the result to him was more fatal than to me—he was sacked by both!

I was not sacked. "The Governor-General in Council, recognising that Mr. Colquhoun . . . has on many occasions exhibited energy and courage, is unwilling to take this extreme step; and therefore directs that Mr. Colquhoun

shall be removed from his appointment as Deputy Commissioner in the Burma Commission and be remanded to the Public Works Department to the position which he held before 1886." The sequel to this was that I was gazetted to a post in Beluchistan, but for reasons hereafter given did not take it up; indeed, I never afterwards did any active work under the Government of India, though remaining nominally in their service till 1894. I do not think the Indian Government could have acted otherwise under the circumstances and with the complexion put on the affair by the C. C. At the time I was very hot about it and agitated not unsuccessfully at home, where I had the support of many influential people, as well as in India; but I see now that I was treated with generosity after being guilty of insubordination which even the aggravation could not excuse though it might explain.

Home I went, taking a few months' holiday in Scotland, which I much needed, and when it seemed certain that my prospects under the Indian Government were blighted I began to look about for another sphere of action. Among my friends and acquaintances was Rochfort Maguire, who introduced me to Alfred Beit, and the latter, after I had seen him several times, gave me letters to Cecil Rhodes in Kimberley. He was so keen that I should go that he actually secured for me a passage out in the kindest way. My *Times* money had been flung right and left on my propaganda for railways and other projects, and not, I may say, on personal indulgence. Some money, moreover, I had been deprived of by a "friend" who acted as my agent while I was abroad and had a power of attorney for me. He had lightened my banking account to the tune of five or six hundred pounds, and received me in the most *debonair* and friendly manner. It was no use suing him, and as a matter of fact I was sorry for him and for his family. It was, therefore, not surprising that, on suddenly having my pay cut down from that of a deputy commissioner to that of an executive engineer, I was at what

is vulgarly called a loose end. My old father, with a young family to bring up, could not have helped me had I thought of asking, and Mr. Beit's assistance was most opportune. The chance might have been missed for want of his help. I am glad to say I was shortly in a position to repay him, and am happy to have the opportunity of acknowledging my obligation to a man who was not only a financial genius but a kind-hearted gentleman. I had other dealings with him in after days and was always treated in the same spirit of consideration, while for tact I have seldom seen his equal. Mr. Buckle, editor of the *Times*, gave me a letter to Rhodes recommending me on account of my frontier work, and Rochfort Maguire, who knew all about me, also wrote to Kimberley.

In this new phase of my life I thought that I had forever said good-bye to Asia, but I was wrong. I have returned to it again and again since then, and still "hear the East a-calling!"

## CHAPTER XII

### SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODES

WHEN one has many departures and arrivals in one's life it is hard to keep them distinct in one's memory, but I shall never forget my start for South Africa. If I have a nightmare now, and if it does not take the form of a competitive examination which I have got to pass, I dream I am catching trains—the nightmare trains which always come in at the wrong platforms and generally behave in a distractingly erratic way. I suppose I shall be considered very “casual” but it is a fact that with all there was at stake I nearly missed the South African mail-boat train! I had not had much time for preparation, it is true, but then I never made preparations in the usual sense. After a day or two full of business I found myself on my last evening dining with a party of chums, including Stewart Lockhart, home from China, Duncan Louttit, and others. After a most cheery night I went back to my rooms in the early morning, and was faced by a great mass of letters to be answered and attended to, which still littered my desk. My portmanteau lay open on the floor and my personal effects were scattered about. I wrote and my friends packed. Every now and then they shouted to me: “Has this beastly despatch-box got to go in?” or “Do you want *all* these beastly maps?” But they did not bother to consult me over clothes, and I was too busy to care. The cab was at the door before the last bag was strapped or the last letter written, and we caught the train by the skin of our teeth.

I sailed on the ss. *Mexican* on November 29, 1889, among my shipmates being Colonel Frank Rhodes, with whom I went up to Kimberley; Mr. C. D. Rudd, who was one of the men concerned in obtaining the concession



from King Lobengula; and an American, Hennen Jennings, who was going out to Johannesburg as consulting engineer to Messrs. Eckstein and Wernher Beit. Jennings and I had tastes in common, had both been partly educated in Germany, and struck up a friendship.

Arrived at Cape Town I lost no time in seeing "sights," but made straight for Kimberley, being well aware that I was not the only runner in the field. The actual scheme which Mr. Rhodes was then working out was not known to the general public, or indeed to anyone outside his immediate circle, but the fact of a large concession and the formation of the company for its development had raised high expectations. I therefore raced up to Kimberley and saw the great man. I did not have to wait long for his verdict, and on Saturday, December 28th, I was able to wire to my friends that Mr. Rhodes had offered me an administrative post with the British South Africa Company, it being understood that I was to stay six months or so with him and then go up to the new territory and start the colony. The form in which my appointment was confirmed by Rhodes in writing (at my request) is so characteristic that I give it here. It must be remembered that he detested putting pen to paper.

*"December 28, /89.*

"DEAR MR. COLQUHOUN,

"I am prepared to offer you an appointment with salary of £800 per annum pending our obtaining civil administration in the Chartered Co. territory, after which I will find you an independent post in the civil administration at a salary of not less than £1,500 per annum. Of course the latter depends on our obtaining the administration of the territory.

"Yours truly,

"C. J. RHODES,

"For the British South Africa Co.

"P.S.—My idea would be to give you charge of Mashonaland as soon as practicable."

Cecil Rhodes was at this time at the zenith of his power, and in another year or so he reached the zenith of his fame. Being so closely associated with him for six months, during which time I was either employed in his office or was travelling about the country getting into touch with people at his special desire, I was able to form a very good estimate of his character and to understand his aims. I have more than once described him as I saw him, and perhaps I may be allowed to quote here a passage from my little book, "The Renaissance of South Africa," which has a special interest as it was written at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, just after the Jameson raid.

"The year 1884 saw the declaration of a German Protectorate in South-West Africa, whose inland boundaries were later defined by the Anglo-German agreement of 1890, which gave Germany access to the Zambesi river by a strip of territory 'at no point less than twenty miles wide.' The intervention of Germany in South Africa, in the south-west certainly and possibly also in the region north of the Zambesi, might have been avoided by the exercise of a little foresight which would have enabled the entire South African coast line to have been kept in British hands. German intervention, however undesirable and awkward as it may prove in the future, had the effect of stimulating into action—not the British Government, which was indifferent and lethargic here, as it had been and is still in Asia, but one man, a man of character, energy and enterprise, with many of the qualities of statesmanship, and the master of resources which enabled him to put them into execution—Cecil Rhodes.

"The career of this remarkable man is too well known to need a detailed account. Coming to South Africa first in search of health, he drifted to the diamond mines, and after years of patient effort succeeded in amalgamating the varying interests there into one company. From that time until the Jameson raid he went from success to success.

"The more interesting side of the question lies, however, in his electric personality which has had so vast an influence on South African history in the past, and must inevitably largely affect that history in the future.

"The magic, which cannot be described in any other word than 'personality,' and which places a man head and shoulders above his fellows without anyone knowing exactly why, the magic which surrounded Mr. Gladstone and enabled such men as de Lesseps and

Eades (of the Mississippi) to sway others of far greater mental ability—this magic belongs to Cecil Rhodes. Despite his power over them, indeed doubtless largely because of it, he has no particular admiration for or belief in his fellow men. It is one of his pet theories that every man has his price, and it is to be feared that a large experience of the world has not cured him of this cynicism. At the same time he is quick to discern qualities in those with whom he is brought in contact which may be useful to him. Courage and pertinacity—particularly pertinacity—will never fail to bring his approbation, and the writer recollects a characteristic incident of a raw Yorkshire lad, who without introductions or qualifications and by literally forcing himself on Rhodes despite rebuffs, won what he desired—a post in the employ of the Chartered Company, which has since led to success and promotion.

“A knowledge of men is, of course, above all things necessary to one who aspires to lead them, and this knowledge is not to be got from books. Nevertheless, there are sides to human nature and phases of life which can only be understood through reading, and this is where Rhodes had the advantage of his frequent adversary Kruger. Kruger knows men only, Rhodes knows men but knows books too, for he is a rapid and omnivorous reader, sucks the heart of a book and throws it aside for another. His literary studies do not take him into the region of intellectual subtleties, but are all connected with living facts. History, ancient and modern, is particularly congenial to him, and he devours anything which tells him of new countries or peoples. Though so prolific of ideas, Rhodes has not the faculty of fluent expression. His speeches, pithy and full of matter, are not flights of oratory, and his ordinary conversation is more remarkable for brevity than for brilliance. As for writing, it is almost a physical impossibility to him; he hardly ever writes even the shortest letter. Originality is stamped on all his thoughts and actions, and red tape is his pet abomination; he is so impatient of it that he shirks even the routine of letter-reading. His independence of thought and action are exemplified in the facts mentioned elsewhere, which show that he was able to conceive and initiate a policy at which successive governments had jibbed for years.

“The two popular opposing pictures of Rhodes are unlike the real man, as such imaginative presentments usually seem to those who know the hero in private life. The famous Englishman is represented alternately as a great statesman of Elizabethan pattern or as an unscrupulous financier.

“As regards the latter charge, no one who has known him at all intimately can be unaware of the very great importance he attaches to the possession of the almighty dollar. Without it his schemes, as he himself declares, would be so much waste paper. It is unfair, however, to say that these are schemes of personal aggrandisement,

although at the same time one cannot imagine Rhodes taking the lowest seat in a kingdom of his own (or any other man's) creation. When a man is born to rule, and realises his power, he cannot be expected to serve. The acquisition of money, and consequently of power, are not with him an end, but merely the means to an end, and that end no ignoble one in *his* eyes. . . .

"To return to his personality, it may interest those who view with approbation the present system of public school education in England in which sports are elevated to the first place in the formation of character, to know that Rhodes is in no sense of the word a sportsman, nor is he fond of physical exertion. A curious parallel is found in another man who looms large on the horizon of to-day—Chamberlain, who is, perforce, even less of an athlete or sportsman than Rhodes. When the biographies of these two as 'Representative Englishmen' are written, it will be interesting to hear how they succeeded in developing so much force of character without the aid of a whole-hearted devotion to football. The restless energy of Rhodes is well known, and is another reason which makes it impossible to discount him altogether in the South African programme.

"It has been said already that Cecil Rhodes does not respect his fellow-men, and it may be added that he has still less respect for them when they attempt, and fail, in the business of government. What he has needed, and what would have kept him from falling into irretrievable blunders was a check, in the shape of a strong government, capable of at once appreciating and directing his ambitions. As a free lance he is dangerous, for he can originate policies which would divide the most united of governments. The question is, can he be induced to run in harness?

"Whatever may happen, it must be set down to the credit of Rhodes that he was the first Englishman of mark who realised the important character of the Dutch element in South Africa, and the absolute necessity of dealing with that factor, and he is also one of the few Englishmen who have understood the native question. In early days his relations with the other race placed him in a position of mistrust at the hands of his own countrymen, but he steadily kept in view the object of pulling with the Dutch. If in later years he departed from this rule of policy on the occasion of the Jameson raid, it must be remembered that meanwhile he had risen to a pinnacle of power through his achievements in the occupation of Mashonaland and Manicaland in 1890, and later on the conquest of Matabeleland in 1893, and that, intoxicated, perhaps, by the universal homage paid to his power on the one hand, and yielding to the pressure of the Johannesburg Uitlanders on the other he allowed his earlier and better judgment to be derailed and overthrown, and ended by finding himself in a predicament which, from the statesman's point of view, was worse than failure, for it was a ludicrous fiasco. The famous

movement into the Transvaal, to use his own expression, 'upset his apple-cart.' Although since that time his influence and popularity have been on the wane Cecil Rhodes has still a future, and his ambitions, dashed for the time, are as lofty as ever."

Alas! this prediction was not to be realised. I did not then know, as I know now, that the bodily weakness over which Rhodes had triumphed in youth was to strike at him before he had time to recover the blow dealt at his prestige. He showed his mettle and recovered a great deal of his popularity in the siege of Kimberley, but friends who were with him in his last years tell me he was never the same man. He used to say to a friend with an exceptionally fine physique:—"You, great healthy chap, will take a long time over dying. I, with my heart and everything, shall just go off pop without any warning!" At the last, when he was kept alive by inhaling oxygen, he fought hard for life and lingered painfully. It must have been bitter for him to go with "so much undone!" Personal anecdotes about such a man are public property and have been disseminated in legions, but those who knew him can detect the imagination of the journalist purveying for a sentimental public in many of these. Rhodes was that curious anomaly—a man with an imagination but little sentiment. He was not a Sunday-school hero any more than he was a jingo Imperialist. He worked hard; lived hard. His real friendships were few. Probably he cared more for his early friend Pickering (who died young) than for any other human being, and after him he had a sincere affection for Jameson. In his later years he had a young *protégé*, a South African, to whom also he was much attached. He took this boy, Jack Grimmer, to Europe to complete his education, and was much disappointed at the effect it had on him. Jack said, "It is all very well for you people who have been brought up on this sort of thing to affect to admire it—pictures, statues and all—but I was brought up on the *veld* and don't understand these things—they bore me!"

The reason of Rhodes' affection for Jack Grimmer was undoubtedly his independent character which even, at times, suggested indifference. I have been told of a letter from Rhodes to a mutual friend asking for news of Jack, "who never writes," and expressing the hope that he is pleased with something that Rhodes had done for him. Poor Jack only survived his friend and patron by a few months. The attraction of this independent spirit for Rhodes, before whom most people became subservient, is also illustrated in the story already alluded to of the young Yorkshire boy. At a time when men with introductions of the most influential kind were applying in vain to be included in the Pioneer force he came up to Kimberley without letters, and dogged Rhodes with such pertinacity that he at last got speech of him, and having got that won the place he had coveted. Rhodes' own attraction was a matter of personal magnetism, which in him was very strong. No man of our time has exercised the same domination over men of all degrees. His attitude towards women was partly the cause of this. Susceptibility to emotion is a source of weakness to the strongest man and Rhodes was absolutely heart-proof. He did not, as is usually supposed, avoid female society. On the contrary, he enjoyed it, but he never gave to any woman the power to control the least of his actions, and he was as impervious to the arts of flattery as to more direct attacks. He liked talking to a clever woman for the same reason that he enjoyed conversation with a clever man, but never went further. On one occasion a very clever woman, a born intriguer, who, in a different century, would have set nations by the ears, thought she could actually establish a hold on him. She attempted to compromise herself with him, and gave a view of their relations which made him furious and his friends laugh. Finally, believing that to prevent his name being linked with hers he would avoid publicity, she forged his signature for a considerable sum but found she had reckoned without her host. Rhodes

cared little for the money, but he was too level-headed to fall into the trap. It was the solitary instance in which his name was coupled with a woman's, and no doubt is possible that it was merely an attempt by a clever and desperate woman to inveigle him. It was partly ambition on her part to be connected, however uncertainly, with the most prominent man of his time. To my certain knowledge she spread the report in literary and political circles that she was not only to marry "Cecil" but had been entrusted by him with the publication of "revelations" as to his policy! To anyone who knew him personally the latter half of this statement discredited the first. She paid dearly for her ambition.

A question which I have heard discussed is whether Rhodes was physically brave or not. It may surprise some people that any two opinions could exist, in view of incidents like his journey to the Matoppos, but as a matter of fact I do not think he was the type of man who is constitutionally brave. His perception of danger and his desire to preserve his own life were both strong; he was not reckless or daring in the manner which wins for some men the reputation for valour which is really due to a deficiency of imagination and nerves. That he displayed courage, both moral and physical, in critical situations is therefore the more to be admired. I am indebted to one who knew him very well for the little known fact that he was afraid of ghosts! At one time he shared a house in Adderley Street, Cape Town, with two other men, and that house was haunted. The ghostly visitant tramped about at night, and so powerfully did he affect the nerves of his fellow-lodgers that neither Rhodes nor the other two would ever sleep alone in the house! My informant has himself occupied the house and without knowing its reputation was disturbed by footsteps in the night. He complained to Rhodes next morning and learnt the fact, already stated, that the empire-builder was not proof against superstition. The mystery was never solved.

Kimberley, where I first saw the empire-builder, was not the modern town of villa residences and big shops. There were a few decent houses, but Rhodes lived in a tin-roofed shanty belonging to Jameson, just opposite the club, and I occupied a similar one, with Robinow, Michaelis junior and Otto Beit. The offices of the Chartered Company were simply a couple of rooms in the De Beers building, and we messed at the Kimberley Club. Rhodes had his own little table, to which only his intimates were invited. However much he might be prepared to rough it in his surroundings he always liked a good table, and the club was already famous throughout South Africa not only for its *cuisine* (all materials having to be brought from the Cape) but for its wines, which were varied and choice. The place was, in a colloquial phrase, "stuffed with money"—more millionaires to the square foot than any other place in the world ("Joburg" had not yet arrived)—and from Rhodes downwards everyone was careless about dress, about housing, about everything except food and drink—especially drink. Kimberley is not now what it was. A year or so ago I tasted in an engineer's hut on the Zambesi river some singularly good hock—"From the Kimberley Club," said my host; "They had a sale of wines there the other day!" What Kimberley is like with De Beers closed down I hardly like to think—Hamlet without not only the ghost but lacking Polonius, the Players, and half the rest of the cast!

A well-known drinking-bar was the place where big transactions of all kinds were put through, and it was a current story of Beit that in former days, when other men, with imaginations inflamed by copious libations of champagne, were trying to do arithmetic on their shirt cuffs, he was coolly presenting his mental calculations and demonstrations and "pulling off" big strokes of business in consequence. The atmosphere of Kimberley in my time was electric. Big things were in the air. "Northern expansion" was on everyone's lips, the Rand was expected to "move"



immediately, and actually did so in the same year. Anyone might be a millionaire next day. I recollect one young fellow, a German clerk in Eckstein's, who, after several adventures, made £80,000, but at what a price! He told me himself it had cost him his life. His nerves were broken with the strain. He went home, and after hanging about "cures" for a few years died—a victim to gold fever. At this time, however, all were full of hopes and speculations, and gambling was rife. Outside this we talked a great deal of I.D.B. (illicit diamond buying), and everyone was full of tales as to this not uncommon foundation for great fortunes. Many of the millionaires who have since peopled Park Lane were familiar figures, though by no means all had the *entrée* to the Kimberley Club, and practically none were met in the houses of the Government officials or married people.

Our amusements were limited. We rode or drove out in the morning or evening to get a breath of air, which hangs heavily over the flat plain on which Kimberley stands. Travelling comedy or opera bouffe companies came up from Cape Town with strong contingents of soubrettes, and as feminine society was limited these young ladies had a good time with the *jeunesse dorée*, some of whom found themselves saddled for life with companions who were hardly fitted to share their later fortunes. Male dinner parties were sometimes given, and were not always successful. I went to one at the private house of a "prominent citizen," which ended in an altercation between the host and one of his guests and a fight, in which the latter was sent flying amidst the *débris* of the feast. We all left in disgust, and I walked home with Rhodes, who said nothing for a time and then burst out with, "What cads! but one has to put up with them!" Rhodes throughout his life took a long ride early every morning as far as possible, and his usual companions were "Tim" Tyson, who ran the Kimberley Club till his death a year or so ago, or

Gardner Williams. Often they rode an hour or more without a word.

I have said that Rhodes was careless about dress. I think at this time he was the worst-dressed man I have ever seen! His old felt hat was battered and dirty, his trousers bagged at the knees, and his coats at the pockets. Later on, when he was in London, friends got hold of him and took him to a good tailor, so that his things were well cut at all events, but I should think he was quite capable of buying them ready made! When entertaining guests at Groot Schuur he never went up to dress till the first carriage was heard driving up, and five or six minutes sufficed for his toilet. I got this little characteristic detail from Sir Charles Metcalfe, having remarked one day that he dressed quicker than any man I knew. He said Rhodes could do even better, and they often used to race! He told me also that a favourite amusement of Rhodes, when in a railway train or hotel, was to invent histories for the people he saw or to speculate as to their relationship to each other—by no means a bad pastime for anyone with a turn for reading character and noting little details of deportment.

I was greatly interested in the engineering works at Kimberley, which were largely the creation of the American, Gardner Williams, a well-known engineer in his own country and a cultivated and interesting man who with his wife lived in his own bungalow, rather apart from the social life which centred in the Club. His son is now the chief engineer of De Beers. Sir Charles Metcalfe came down for a few days every now and then from the survey work for railways on which he was engaged. He had originally come out to South Africa representing influential private persons who desired to detach Rhodes from the "eliminate the Imperial factor" policy of which he was then the apostle. He was able to assure his friends that Rhodes was really sound on the Imperial connection, and as a matter of fact, when the time comes for a full history

of these times, it will be found that Cecil Rhodes had two distinct periods of political aims, and that the second, with its wide Imperialist vision of a great territory to the north which would be British at the core and balance the rest of South Africa—this vision dates from about 1888. Once he had decided, powerful influence at home helped to secure the Charter and the support necessary for carrying out the daring plans he conceived. I know that once or twice during my period of office work at Kimberley he was afraid that his backers were going to fail him, and his language on these occasions was lurid, for though not habitually intemperate in speech he was subject to fits of rage in which he let himself go. Sir Charles Metcalfe, who was one of Rhodes' closest intimates in later years and up to his death, is still at work on the "Cape to Cairo" railway, which is usually spoken of as one of Rhodes' great ideas. It was, however, in its original form an engineering conception, and the name "Cape to Cairo" occurs in an article written by Metcalfe and Ricarde Seaver in the *Fortnightly Review* of 1888, before Rhodes had given it serious consideration. Mr. Stead adopted the idea and the name, and was even credited by some with having invented the latter, and Rhodes, once his interest had been roused, was ardent in his support of a project which helped to enlist the popular imagination in favour of his "Northern expansion." The story of the concession, obtained by him personally from the Emperor, that the line should be permitted to pass through German territory is well known. It is to be regretted that Rhodes never saw the glorious Falls, now accessible to all by the line his support made possible. He had a favourite imagination about the spray dashing against the windows of the carriage as the train, on a slender framework of steel, crawled over the bottomless abyss in which the waters boil for ever, and where the great sheet comes crashing down from the height above. It is all there—the bridge, the train, the spray, and the boiling abyss—the

grandest sight on God's earth. But Cecil Rhodes never saw it.

Among the many instances of Rhodes' influence over men I recollect that Schnadhorst, the creator of the Liberal caucus which exercised at this time so powerful an influence over the fortunes of the party, came to Kimberley on Rhodes' invitation. He had been ill, and the climate of the *veld* was recommended to him. In a fortnight Rhodes had converted him, an ardent Radical, into an equally ardent supporter of the Imperialist expansion policy. I may be wrong, but I think that Schnadhorst advised the contribution made by Rhodes to the Irish party, which disarmed some of their opposition at a critical time. There has been much discussion as to the motive for this donation, but I think it was purely a political move. Rhodes was, as I have said, a firm believer in the power of the dollar and had no false shame about his methods. I remember once he said, speaking of a man who was notoriously upright, "Of course you can't go and plank down a bag of dollars in front of him—he would kick you out—but there are *ways*!" Often he has said to me about my China railway projects and my desire to establish Great Britain's supremacy in the Far East: "Yes, it's a big thing, a big thing, and it could be done! I should have liked to take a hand in that myself if I weren't so tied up here, but you'll never do anything with it, Colquhoun; you've got no money!" I thought him cynical then, but I know him wise now. My return to official work in Burma (rendered necessary in order to gain a living) was the signal for a flagging of the interest and enthusiasm I had worked up. Now, in Africa, I really believe my great idea was to earn enough money to retire and be independent, so that I could once more devote myself to my beloved East; but the process was too slow, and no one ever had less talent for money making than myself! If I had had any turn for finance, I should have made a fortune in South Africa in these days, for I was in

with the men who "knew." I had serious ideas of investing what I could scrape together in the Rand, but a friend and, as I thought, a reliable authority, advised me that the boom might not come for several years and I should probably be squeezed out. "If you had two thousand lying idle, I would say Yes," he wrote, "but as it is, No!" I took his advice—which he himself followed—and the boom came that very year. My bad judgment was in consulting a sober, reliable engineer who looked at probabilities, while Africa has always been the country where the speculator, not the expert, has done best and where the improbable invariably happens.

I was not the only man to make mistakes. In 1881 an Australian expert was engaged to make an examination of what became "the Rand" and, within sight of the "banket" reef, he abandoned the locality as worthless! Rhodes himself rode over the Rand after its first discovery with Gardner Williams, and the latter, the great American mining engineer, told him it was not worth getting off his horse for!

I was still a servant of the Government of India. On receiving Rhodes' offer of December 28, I wrote asking for permission to retire on a pension commensurate with the term of my service. Rhodes himself also wrote asking the Colonial Office to secure him my services. My first request was refused, but it was eventually arranged that I should be "seconded" for three years, which were to count towards my service. During these three years I had to pay a considerable sum to keep up my claim to a pension, which in the ordinary course of events would not be my right until I had served another fifteen years or so. I belonged to the uncovenanted service whose pension conditions are inferior to those of the covenanted Civil Service. I may as well finish this subject by explaining that at the end of these three years I asked for and received permission to resign, receiving a special pension, so that my object of securing an independent and certain income was finally attained.

At the period of my arrival in South Africa the question of communications was most important and pressing. From Cape Town the line, which had recently reached Kimberley, was being pushed on to Vryburg (in British Bechuanaland) skirting the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic. The importance of the extension through Bechuanaland of this road to the north lay in the fact that an irruption of the Boers on the north might at any moment have cut the route to that land of promise which contained the concession from Lobengula, the King of Matabeleland, which was to be the foundation of a British colony. The Cape railways were being extended to Bloemfontein, and in the Transvaal Kruger was pushing forward the Delagoa Bay line with all the speed possible, for a variety of reasons which need not be discussed here.

I went at Mr. Rhodes' desire to Johannesburg and Pretoria, and at the latter place had an interview with the President in which railways absorbed most of our attention, my real objective in South Africa being somewhat hidden by my well-known interest in communications. I was to sound Kruger and if possible find out, without direct questions, what was his attitude to our "Northern expansion."

I found the President on the *stoep* of the unpretentious shabby little house which is still shown to visitors in Pretoria as the "Kruger home." This house was converted, after the peace of 1903, into a hotel—"The President's Hotel"—and this outrage on sentiment was not the result of a stranger's indifference but of the business-like, unimaginative character of his own friends and relations to whom it belonged. The house stands on the road and just opposite to the ugly, red-brick Gereformeerde Church, whose silver-gilt bell accompanied the President in his flight. In the room which was his bedroom, beneath the heavy wooden bedstead, was a secret passage and chamber, the former intended, I believe, to lead over to the church, but I do not think it was ever completed. Probably

the President used it as a strong-room. When opened it contained a musket or two but nothing of special interest. In 1890 I found Paul Kruger, then sixty-five years of age, a strong-looking man. He sat in a leather-covered arm-chair, in dirty-looking clothes, his hair and beard long, a big Dutch pipe in his mouth, and a huge, red bandanna handkerchief hanging out of the side pocket of his loose jacket. A prominent piece of furniture was a large spittoon, of which he made frequent use. I was accompanied in my visit by Lord Houghton (the present Lord Crewe) and the Duke of Montrose, and the contrast between the men, especially between Houghton and the President, was very striking—the extremes of culture and boorishness. There is no doubt that, with all his surface rusticity, Kruger was a genius—a master of statecraft. His most striking characteristic was a sphinx-like immobility of countenance—no one could forget that great pale heavy face and the little eyes, whose lids closed over them like the hood of a cobra. He did not speak English and professed not to understand it, though as to this last I had my doubts. The advantage he gained, especially in later years, of time to turn things over in his mind while the interpreter was translating was one he was not likely to forego. He had learnt his craft from men and animals, not from books. All his similes—and he was fond of them—were taken from nature: for instance, the famous “tortoise” to which he likened the Uitlander. “Let it peer and peer, but wait till the head comes right out—then strike!” The head came out with a vengeance—and Kruger struck! The “Flag incident” the year before had not made him more friendly to the Uitlanders. The President was visiting Johannesburg and at a meeting the crowd sang “Rule, Britannia!” when the old man roared out “*Blig stil*!” (be quiet)—the crowd laughed and he stalked away. The same night the Transvaal flag over the Landrost’s house was pulled down. I believe Kruger never again visited Johannesburg.

So much has been written as to the personal character of this extraordinary man, and so much that might be written verges on the controversial, that I must confine myself to Kruger as I saw him. I may, however, permit myself the observation that, although he represented some of the sturdy national qualities of the Dutch, he was out of sympathy with the more progressive and educated among them, and in the ordinary course of events his power would have diminished, for already a different ideal was springing up amongst the Transvaalers to the one for which he, and the *voortrekkers* to whom he belonged, had given so much to attain. Pretoria was a little country town in these days, with few really good houses and I think no hotel—probably only some rough kind of inn. My host at Pretoria was the singular being known as Nelmapius, a celebrated person in his way. An Austrian Jew by birth, and (it was rumoured) originally a valet by profession, he drifted to the Transvaal and succeeded by his power of intrigue in building up considerable influence with Kruger. He acted as a go-between in all sorts of transactions, especially between the President and the Uitlanders. Incidentally he kept a very hospitable house and one met there everyone in Pretoria. He made several fortunes but died a comparatively poor man. I stayed, on my visit to Johannesburg, with “Jim” Taylor, the well-known representative of the Robinson mines, who had one of the few decent houses in those days, a little distance out, and another guest was Hennen Jennings, who had come out with me by the same steamer.

The journey from Kimberley was done by stage coach, a lumbering vehicle which rumbled heavily over a most primitive road drawn by a team of sixteen mules. A similar coach still plies in Rhodesia between Selukwe and Victoria. These chariots are the regular stage coaches of other days, but as a matter of fact I believe they were imported from California or Australia, where such antiquated methods of travel still survive in out-of-the-way



parts. The inside can hold three seats wide enough for three persons, one facing the horses and one back to it, the third let down between the windows—nine inside passengers and an unlimited number outside on the knife-board, with luggage piled up on the rumble behind and littering every corner of the coach inside. A strong "Cape boy" on the seat holds the reins and another beside him wields a great whip, which is constantly in use, flicking the leaders. Every now and then he springs down and runs alongside the team slashing with a short *sjambok*, and his yells and cries never cease, for the mules must be urged every mile of the way. I once did ninety-five miles in a day, part by coach and part by Cape cart, and the same "boy" drove me the whole way—from 6 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.—with not more than a couple of hours spent in outspanning during the day. Frequent relays are necessary, and the change is made often at a spot where there is no human habitation, only a rough *zarceba* (enclosure) and a water-trough filled from the nearest river or hole. The river-beds, often dry save for a trickle through the centre, are deeply worn, and after the coach has lurched down one side into the bed it seems a physical impossibility to drag it up the other. The wheels sink deep into sand, clouds of dust envelop everything, and through it one sees the team of sweating labouring mules and hears the crack of the *sjambok* and the yells of the Cape boys. Such a drive as this, occupying about three and a half days from Kimberley to Johannesburg, was somewhat of a deterrent to all but serious visitors, but not a few English ladies can remember doing the journey several times to join and rejoin their husbands. On the occasion of my going up we were packed inside like sardines, and a woman sat next to me who became perfectly comatose shortly after the start and used me as a pillow, to the intense hilarity of the miners who were the majority of our companions. Refreshments by the way were provided at the tin shanties where we outspanned and consisted of

"cawfee," the black decoction well-known all over South Africa by that name, often thick enough for one's spoon to stand up and always sweetened to nauseousness with brown sugar. With this we had "steak"—pieces of leather swimming in grease—yams and mealies, the latter the only eatable portion of the repast—the whole served up in tin cans and on dirty plates by the most slatternly-looking Kaffir girls in cast-off European garments. At night a bed of sorts in a Kaffir hut was a luxury, because these huts are both cool in summer and warm in winter, but more often a wood and tin shanty boarded off into rooms was provided. There was a great struggle for beds when the coach was full, and on this occasion I and another man had a struggle to secure accommodation for the three or four women passengers. We were sharing a room ourselves when the rowdy element, in the shape of a party of jockeys and turf hangers-on going up to "Joburg," came in and threatened to fire us out. We defended our position successfully but not without trouble.

Of course, no one who had time and money to spare endured the discomforts of mail coach travelling, for the most delightful form of travel in the world was open to them. This was "trekking" with ox-waggon over the *veld*. I daresay people whose taste has been permanently vitiated by rushing over hard, high roads in motors at the rate of thirty to forty miles an hour would consider this method of procedure tame, but there is another way to estimate the enjoyment of travel beyond the mere number of miles covered and the places visited. The slow passage of the creaking waggon over the roadless *veld*, made beautiful in spring by a low-growing mass of strange and often beautiful flowers, glorified always by the fascination of illimitable space and the strange suggestion of peaked blue mountains on the far distant but clearly visible horizon; passing perhaps through a country of waving grass where wild buck start from their lairs and flee away before the crack of the gun, perhaps skirting a break in

the land where on a commanding site a Basuto village shows its huts (like mushrooms) on a piece of rock; at other times coming unawares on a garden of mealies and a fence of prickly pear such as, in the Transkei, surrounds the prosperous kraal of a Fingo tribe; oftenest (in the writer's experience) breaking through a low jungle into an open park-like country, dotted with groups of trees and rolling picturesquely away to the blue distance where the great Zimbabwe nestles among the encroaching vegetation—such scenes are forever bound up with that creak, creak, creak of the heavy waggon which is the music of a South African trek. I do not think they would be the same to the accompaniment of a "hooter" and the smell of petrol! But even such incidents as I have suggested are unnecessary to the pleasures of the trek. One has always the sky—the wonderful sky of South Africa, the champagne of that stimulating climate, the sense of space. Waking early in one's house on wheels one breakfasts in the fresh morning air on coffee, eggs, and bread made in an ant-heap oven. Presently the oxen are inspanned and one mounts a horse and rides free and wild over the *veld*, circling round the waggon or galloping forward to await it. When the sun gets too hot the waggon becomes one's couch. Book in hand, one lies and reads, or watches the slow white clouds drifting and the play of light and shade over the *veld*. Dinner may be simple or a feast for the gods, with game stewed in a pot, *biltong* in long savoury strips, or *sasaatjes* toasted on skewers of wood over a clear fire and served with curry sauce—the *kabobs* of India and Persia, imported to the Cape *cuisine* in the old days. When night comes down swiftly on the camp one lies and watches the disappearing outline of things around us until the stars shine out in their splendour, the cold fresh breeze springs up over the *veld*, bringing with it a clear fragrance which can never be forgotten, and one falls asleep wrapped warmly in a *kaross* of skins and sleeps such a sleep as comes only in the fresh air and after a day of quiet

communing with Nature. For sheer luxury, trekking in South Africa, with a good cook and careful provision made by an old hand, is not to be beaten. Cecil Rhodes understood this and took his rare holidays always in this fashion. When on trek he dined always at six, and by nine he was fast asleep.

My first sight of Johannesburg—Joburg as it is always called in South Africa—was not very impressive. There was a big square, where all the people came in and held a market, and where one engaged waggons for *treks*, arranged for supplies to be sent out to the mines, or put through any one of the multifarious pieces of business common in a town which is the centre of a pioneer population. Round this square were a few buildings, shops, one hotel, tin shanties and offices, and outside that a few rows of shanties and a number of corrugated iron houses dotted irregularly about. The rents of these most uncomfortable dwellings were perfectly colossal, and the cost of living was proportionate throughout. Service was almost unprocureable. Raw Kaffirs, who till a few months before had never seen the inside of a house, were pressed into a service for which they have no natural bent, and the best one could hope for was an inferior type of Cape boy. Only budding magnates like my host "Jim" Taylor could afford to keep up a decent establishment, and his house, well appointed and with an excellent table, was a perfect oasis in the desert! He had a billiard room, I remember, and the house had some pretensions to architecture. In this billiard room I first saw Lionel Phillips, Abe Bailey, and many other magnates of later days. I recollect that in honour of the arrival of the Duke and Lord Houghton we decided to dress for dinner—a sacrifice to the conventions not usual in Joburg in those days! On another occasion we had quite a grand dinner party graced by the presence of two ladies, Mrs. Lionel Phillips being, I believe, one of them. How quaint these recollections seem when I remember the Joburg of 1904—as I last saw

it! Then I stayed with Lord Milner in what might have been a well appointed English country house with a pleasant garden round it. I dined at many houses where the appointments would have done credit to New York and the service to London, and went to the opera afterwards, where an excellent performance of "Pagliacci" was witnessed by a fashionable and bejewelled audience.

Joburg when I first saw it was devoid of trees, and was the ugliest place I had ever seen except Kimberley, being only slightly redeemed by the fact that it does not lie on a flat plain like the latter, but has some hills and valleys surrounding it. When I returned to it thirteen years afterwards, it was absolutely unrecognisable. Not only are there fine business quarters and shops but the residential portion stretches out in long roads lined with trees, and the fashionable quarter, Park Town, is like a pretty London suburb, with its pretentious villas embosomed in gardens and a view over a rolling valley covered with pine-woods. The great drawback has always been the red dust, which swirls round one unexpectedly in the Joburg streets and is ruinous, I am told, to the ladies' toilets. There is, however, comparatively little dust in the high-lying suburb of Park Town.

After these visits I went down to Cape Town and saw Rhodes there. The famous Mount Nelson Hotel had not yet been built, the position being made accessible later by tram lines. Everyone put up at the Royal or Sea Point. At Cape Town I met Sir Henry (later Lord) Loch, then High Commissioner, and discovered from him that he was an old friend of my father's and had been in the same regiment in India in 1844. He was very friendly to me on this account, and during my administrative work I corresponded with him regularly. Loch was one of the few men who left South Africa at the end of his term without leaving his reputation in that "grave" which has swallowed so many. He was in these days very prudent and non-committal, and I recollect that Rhodes was by

no means certain as to what line he would take towards the projected occupation of Mashonaland.

Matters were now nearly ripe for the latter, and at this point I may give a bird's-eye view of the situation for the benefit of readers who may have forgotten the sequence in this page of English history. The point at issue was, not whether the authority of the native chief who ruled in Matabeleland should be disturbed, but who was to do it. The Boers were anxious to secure the Land of Promise, the Portuguese were nibbling at Mashonaland, and Germany was casting longing eyes from her post of vantage on the west coast. In 1887 the territories of Matabeleland and Mashonaland were subject to Lobengula, son of the great chief Moselikatze who had been driven north by the Boers. He had conquered the Mashona and desolated their land—the flower of the South African territories. In 1888, at Rhodes' instigation, the British Government obtained a treaty with Lobengula (a despotic Zulu ruler of the usual type) and by this treaty he engaged not to make any agreement with a foreign Power or to sell or cede his lands without the sanction of the British High Commissioner. This constituted a British protectorate over Matabeleland and Mashonaland, but without effective occupation this could not be maintained, especially in view of Lobengula's very doubtful claims over a good portion of the territory thus ear-marked. As has been said, Portugal on the east, Germany on the west, and the Transvaal on the south were “nibbling.” Various syndicates were despatched to seek concessions from Lobengula, and an important one, known as the Rudd concession, was secured by Rudd, Rochfort Maguire and F. R. Thompson. The various interests involved were amalgamated in one company in 1889 by Rhodes, and under these circumstances the British South Africa Company was born. The charter was obtained in October, 1889, which granted to it the right to construct railways and telegraphs, to promote trade and colonisation, and finally to develop the mineral

and other concessions. The names of the directors to whom the charter was granted were the Dukes of Fife and Abercorn, Lord Gifford, Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Beit, Mr. (now Lord) Grey and Mr. Cawston, and the capital was only one million sterling. To give practical effect to this charter it was decided that a pioneer column should go up and establish itself in the heart of the country, and I was to accompany it and report on its progress, and if the settlement was successfully accomplished to establish civil government and draw up the elementary regulations for the new community.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MASHONALAND AND GROOT SCHUUR

THE Rhodesian pioneers consisted of two hundred armed and mounted English and South African Volunteers, organised and commanded by Major Frank Johnson, and five hundred mounted police specially raised for the purpose, and admirably equipped with arms, mountain and machine guns, electric light and other appliances, the whole under the command of Colonel Pennefather of the Inniskilling Dragoons, a regiment which had had great experience in the Zulu wars. The applications for inclusion in these two forces came in by hundreds, and young fellows with and without introductions were always turning up at the Kimberley office and worried all of us considerably. We took with us the well-known hunter, F. C. Selous, as a guide and scout. He had already been nearly twenty years in the country, had hunted practically all over it, and knew the native peoples and their ways, both Matabele and Mashonas. Colenbrander, the Africander scout, started with us but returned to Buluwayo when Jameson joined the column and stayed there to keep an eye on Lobengula.

We did not go off with any fanfare of trumpets. On the contrary, in our desire to avoid attracting attention we dribbled out of Kimberley, and our first gathering-place was Macloutsie, on the Tuli river, in the territory of the celebrated chief Khama. This portion of Bechuana-land had long been the scene of missionary labours, and Khama himself, a most enlightened and progressive chief, had for his adviser Mr. Hepburn. Khama had been very glad originally to strengthen himself against Lobengula by claiming the protection of Great Britain, and he was



quite ready to see the settlement of white men within his country. In the last few weeks I have read a letter from him which illustrates in only too graphic a manner how impossible it is for two civilisations to exist side by side without the weaker going to the wall. Khama was approached by Mr. E. B. Sargant, Education adviser to the High Commissioner of South Africa, on the subject of tribal contributions towards the up-keep of education in his country—in principle the establishment of a school-rate. He resisted this on the ground that, being now an old man of seventy-five, he did not feel equal to bringing before his tribe a proposal from which the majority would dissent. In his earlier years, he said, he forbade the drinking of Kaffir beer—prohibited it entirely for many years. Then arose a section of his tribe, under the leadership of his younger brother, who desired to drink beer, and as Khama refused to listen to them or to alter the law they went to the white magistrate (for white settlers had brought with them their own jurisdiction). The latter, while agreeing in principle, was obliged to admit that in practice Khama could not enforce his will on his brother, and the beer-drinking section simply hived off from the rest of the tribe and so weakened the position of the chief! This and other instances given by Khama show how the tribal control, often salutary, has been weakened, even where it has been our desire not to interfere with it.

I feel sorry for poor old Khama, who was a good friend to the Pioneers. Indeed, without his country as a jumping-off place it is doubtful if we could have made so successful a march. It must be mentioned that by agreement with Lobengula we were to occupy the Eastern portion of his territory, Mashonaland, where the people, decimated by the Matabele conquests, were comparatively submissive. Even so, it was doubtful if “Loben” could hold his *impis* together when they heard of the little column marching up through their land. Jameson went up to Buluwayo and kept the uncertain king in palaver while we started,

and to his diplomacy, with Selous' skill as a guide and scout, I chiefly attribute the fact that the Pioneers accomplished their march without a hostile encounter of any kind.

My last news from home, which reached me at Mac-loutsie before we started on a march which was considered to be full of danger, was that my father was dead and that one of my sisters, Mrs. Symington, was near her end. I was considerably worried by the thought that my step-mother and her children might be left badly off, while I might not get through our enterprise and be in a position to help her if necessary. Fortunately, however, my father had made full provision for her and his young family, and was even able to leave a few hundreds to each of his elder children. I did not know this till later and left Mac-loutsie with rather a heavy heart. A nephew was now with me, a son of my sister in America, who had joined us a few days after the start.

We rode in column formation. Selous with his scouts (most of them lent by Khama) went on in front and spread out on either side, the Pioneers and police surrounded the waggons, and the guns brought up the rear, with more scouts behind. With all the precautions we could take, however, we were conscious that in the broken and scrubby country, which became more and more difficult as we approached Mashonaland, we could have been cut up in a few moments by a determined attack. We were anxious and on the alert until we reached the open country, but on the high plateau of Mashonaland we breathed more freely. At night the waggons were *laagered* and the electric search-light played over the surrounding country to reveal any enemies who might have tried to stalk us. The scattered bands of Mashonas must have thought wonderful things of this strange body of men, so curiously clad and armed, who called to their aid a great white eye which watched over them at night and pierced into the heart of the jungle with its rays. To get the guns and waggons along we had

to cut through the banks of the drifts and sometimes to make corduroy roads. Here and there the track had to be cut through thick jungle.

I remember the bivouac at night, when we took our well-earned rest rolled in our *karosses* and mackintosh sheets, the camp fire flickering and a savoury steam going up from cooking pots. The troopers round their fire sang lustily in the still African night, while the smoke and scent of their pipes, charged with the Boer tobacco which is good only on the *veld* but unsurpassable there, filled the air with a peculiar pungency. A favourite song, of which the refrain has stuck to me ever since, dealt in true Tommy fashion with life's little ironies and had appropriate colour:

“ There goes the I.D.B. !  
Are ye there, Moriar-r-i-ty ? ”

with a rich Irish brogue. This never failed to bring down the house. The great, white eye of our electric light attracted the wild animals, of which the country was then full, but also kept them at bay. When we got on to the high *veld* we saw large herds of giraffes, zebra and buck, and later on, in the north of Mashonaland, elephants and lions. Gold prospecting at a later date was complicated by the dangers from these beasts, and I remember one man had the novel experience of seeing three lions at three different places on the same day. Rhodes himself once had a narrow escape from a lion on his way up from Beira. He had gone out for a morning stroll in his pyjamas and was seen racing back as hard as he could pelt, having nearly walked into a lion at a turn in the path.

After a ten weeks march the Pioneers accomplished their journey of 450 miles, building four forts in which they left garrisons on the way to maintain the line of communication. On September 20, 1890, they reached their destination, Mount Hampden, some ten miles north of the spot where the town of Salisbury now stands.

On the way up, shortly after reaching the plateau, with a party which included Selous, Jameson (who had now joined the column) and Fiennes, I started off to make a treaty with the Chief of the Manika and obtain for the British South Africa Company concessions for the mineral and other rights in his territory. I was desirous of obtaining some reliable information and, if possible, ocular evidence of that ever-vanishing and hitherto unknown quantity—the will-o'-the-wisp of so-called Portuguese "occupation." On our way up through Mashonaland, not a trace or vestige of the existence of the Portuguese at any time, much less of a present occupation of this country, to which they had laid claim with much well-simulated indignation a year before, could be detected, or at any rate was visible to the naked eye. The ruins we saw—at Zimbabwe, for instance, and other places—could never by the wildest stretch of imagination be ascribed to Portuguese handiwork, or admitted for one moment as fulfilling their invariable contention of "ancient ruins and traditions," upon which they laid so much stress and based their chimerical rights in this part of the world. Until we reached Manika there was nothing of general interest to record. We passed through some of the most charming scenery imaginable, crossing numerous streams of clear, swiftly flowing water over rocky beds, winding their way amongst perfect wooded mountain scenery, of which one could find the exact counterpart in favoured portions of either Scotland or Wales.

On September 13 we halted close to the objective point of the mission, the kraal of the Manika Chief Umtassa (or Mutasa), or Mafamba-Basuko ("One who walks by night") as he preferred to style himself, or again Sifamba, as he was generally spoken of by the local natives. The kraal itself (at an altitude of 4,300 feet above sea-level) was situated at the head of what is really a pass, completely concealed from below in mountain fastnesses and lying under a sheer massive granite ridge of rock another five or

six hundred feet high—a position, at all events in Kaffir warfare, absolutely impregnable.

Negotiations were at once opened and an interview arranged for the day after our arrival, an appointment that was punctually kept. It must be confessed that the appearance and presence of the hereditary and reigning monarch of the ancient kingdom of Manika were not quite what one would desire to see in a great ruler. No doubt the utmost resources of his wardrobe had been taxed and brought into requisition for this interview. About midday he appeared attired in a naval cocked hat, a tunic (evidently of Portuguese origin but of ancient date, and forming perhaps some of the “ancient remains” to which the attention of the world had been so pathetically drawn), a leopard skin slung over his back, the whole toilette being completed by a pair of trousers that had evidently passed through many hands, or rather covered many legs, before assisting to complete the court uniform of the “roitelet Mutassa,” as the Portuguese termed him. He was preceded by his court jester, who danced around him uttering strange cries and ejaculations and singing his praises (in which Umtassa cordially joined) as “the lion or leopard who walks by night,” and “before whose name the Portuguese and Matabele tremble.” The retinue was completed by a few girls carrying *calabashes* of Kaffir beer, and by a crowd of *indunas* (or counsellors) and other loyal subjects. The king was evidently anxious to satisfy himself thoroughly of the genuineness of my mission and the value and strength of the promises held out to him. It was not until the following day, when in the royal kraal a full *indaba* (or council) of *indunas* was held, that, after lengthy discussion, a treaty was signed between myself, acting on behalf of the British South Africa Company, and the King of Manika. Before signing the treaty it was carefully explained to Umtassa that, if he had at any time granted any treaty or concession to anyone else, the negotiations would be at once closed. And it was only

after his repeated assurance that such was not the case, that no treaty of any kind had ever been executed by him, and no concession ever granted to the Portuguese, that the Company's treaty with him was duly signed and formally witnessed by two of his own *indunas* and some members of my party.

We learnt that some Portuguese connected with the Mozambique Company were established at Massi-Kessi, at the foot of the slope of the plateau, and it was stated that the company claimed a large track of territory west of Massi-Kessi by virtue of a concession from the Portuguese Government.

Umtassa, as I say, was repeatedly asked whether at any time he had ever ceded his country either to the Portuguese Government or to the directors of the Mozambique Company, and he as repeatedly denied ever having done so, as also did his chief counsellors. When questioned as to the terms he was on with the Baron de Rezende, the local representative of the Mozambique Company at Massi-Kessi, he said, "I allow him to live there. He sometimes gives me presents, but I have not given him my country, nor have I ever concluded any treaty with him." Later on he said repeatedly that the Portuguese "held an assegai at his heart," and when pressed for an explanation of this statement affirmed that he was terrorised and compelled to do what the Baron required by the threat that if he gave any trouble Gouveia would be called in to invade his territory with a large armed force. There is no doubt that the fear of this Portuguese free lance, ever looming in the distance, was instrumental in great measure in inducing Umtassa to conclude the treaty he did. It is true that he was evidently greatly impressed by the fact of a large British expedition coming through the Matabele country from the far south and of some of its members so soon finding their way into his own dominions. The whiteness of their skins, as opposed to the dark yellow or black of the Portuguese half-castes, and their travelling with horses

and pack animals, without porters and palanquins *à la Portugaise*, were also a source of great astonishment to him. But the fact he seized upon and grasped at once was undoubtedly the offer of protection by the British South Africa Company both for himself and his people. At the chief's urgent request one policeman and a native interpreter were left with him as representatives of the Company, pending the establishment later on of a regular police post to safeguard the Company's interest in the Manika country and to protect Umtassa against any attack that might be made upon him.

The importance of Manika lay not only in the fact that it brought the British South Africa Company's frontier nearer the coast and put a definite stop to Portuguese expansion, but also that at that time great things were expected of the Manika goldfields, which had been worked from time immemorial. About Rhodesian goldfields generally I shall have more to say later on.

On the way to Manika Jameson had a bad accident in being thrown from his horse, and had to be left behind. I have a characteristic letter written by him at this juncture, which is well worth quoting because of some little side-lights on the local politics of the day. After some details about food, waggons, and trading stuffs, he says:

"My infernal side gets more shaky instead of better—the torments of the damned after trying to get up for a few minutes. So, as I would only be an encumbrance to Selous at present, I am going on to Mount Hampden (our original idea for a terminus, about ten miles north of Salisbury) to await him there or join him after you return. As the tent is the only means of making a hammock to be carried in I am using it. Tell Selous I will bring or send him another if he goes on. The only alternative is to lie here indefinitely—poor sport. The natives brought some good gold here yesterday—a lot of Portuguese bastards here evidently trading in gold. I suppose you would put a P.S. to your concession form giving the most extensive

limits Umtassa will allow—to the coast if possible—and get him to sign it as well as the form. That would include everything. Love to all, wish you every success.”

The chief instrument of the Portuguese in advancing their claims in this region had been a Goanese adventurer named Gouveia, otherwise known as Manuel Antonio de Souza. He was “Capitan-Mor” of a province in the Portuguese territory, and, like other Portuguese officials, was called a “Zambesi prince.” At his capital he had gathered a court of scoundrels and adventurers, as well as a large number of slaves, and the chiefs in the neighbourhood lived in dread of him and of the “visits of persuasion” which he paid them from time to time. With the exception of Gouveia and the Baron de Rezende—an official who had recently appeared at Massi-Kessi, not far from Umtassa’s kraal—the Portuguese occupation of this part of South Africa was by no means an accomplished fact, which was very satisfactory for us.

Upon the conclusion of the Manika treaty Mr. Selous and two others of my mission rode on to Massi-Kessi, where, it was said, some Portuguese were established. Selous and his party on their way to that place met a party of East Coast blacks in charge of two Portuguese officials (one a captain in the Portuguese army, the other a civil engineer) recently arrived from the coast and bearing a letter to me—I had remained behind in the neighbourhood of Umtassa’s kraal—protesting against the presence of the representatives of the Company in Manika as well as Mashonaland generally. On hearing that Selous, who informed them where I could be found, wished to go on to Massi-Kessi, they intimated their willingness to fall in with that arrangement, and Selous went on and visited the Baron de Rezende. The latter may have had, under normal circumstances, a small retinue of black “soldiers”; but these, it is understood, had been told off summarily to swell the *cortège énorme, avec un drapeau déployé* (as the party was afterwards described) despatched



late the evening before with the letter of protest to myself. Every nerve had no doubt been strained to render the *cortège* of as imposing an appearance as possible, with the object of duly impressing me with the solid and substantial, not to say military, nature of Portuguese occupation. Beyond this one isolated representative of the Mozambique Company, however, Selous failed to trace the existence of one single other resident Portuguese, either official, colonist, trader, or miner. There were certainly two or three engineers in the neighbourhood, temporarily engaged in surveying, and there were the two recently arrived officials from the coast already mentioned.

The contrast between this and the occupation of Mashonaland by the British South Africa Company struck us forcibly soon after. At Fort Salisbury—to say nothing of what had been done at the various stations below—within one month of the arrival of the expedition several hundred prospectors were scouring the country in all directions in search of gold, forts had been built, huts were springing up in every direction, postal communication was punctually kept up from the base, and the general work of administration was being soundly and firmly established.

The Baron de Rezende was spoken of in high terms by the English prospectors who enjoyed the privilege of his acquaintance. Towards Selous's party his demeanour was that of frigid official courtesy. He protested against our presence both in Manika and Mashonaland. He pointed out that these territories belonged to his Majesty the King of Portugal from time immemorial; that the *voitelet* of Manika was a vassal of theirs; that their authority was based upon ancient rights and rights secured from Gungunhama, king of the Gaza country, who recently had been induced to move with his people to the neighbourhood of Delagoa Bay, so as to enable the Portuguese to have a freer hand in Gazaland and Manika and to keep in closer touch with this powerful Kaffir chief. It must be admitted that the Baron de Rezende, though evidently

suffering from intense irritation, played his part courteously and well. He performed with dignity and tact the exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, task of bolstering up and defending claims and pretensions to vast regions which, in legal phraseology, had no foundation either in substance or in fact.

Meanwhile, towards the end of October, in consequence of reports from native sources that Colonel Paiva d'Andrada, accompanied by Gouveia with a large force of armed natives, was approaching the Manika country from the east, I determined to take decisive measures. I despatched small parties of police under Lieutenants Graham and the Hon. Eustace Fiennes, and later Major P. W. Forbes, to Umtassa's. To Major Forbes, in whom I had great confidence, I gave explicit instructions, which he carried out to my entire satisfaction. I judged that officer, who for one so young had considerable experience of the conditions of soldiering in South Africa, to be a man of clear judgment, vigorous mind, and determined character, of which he later gave abundant proof. Upon his arrival at Umtassa's kraal, on November 5, Major Forbes learnt that Colonel d'Andrada, accompanied by Gouveia, had recently arrived at Massi-Kessi with from 250 to 300 so-called "bearers," the majority armed with rifles, sword-bayonets, and reserve ammunition. The avowed object of this armed force was to mete out punishment to Umtassa for signing the obnoxious treaty of September 14. Major Forbes at once sent a letter to Colonel d'Andrada at Massi-Kessi, protesting against his entering the Manika country with an armed force, and warning him against taking any steps which might wear the appearance of an attempt to upset the treaty, as such action on his part would inevitably lead to serious and grave complications. Major Forbes further requested Colonel d'Andrada to withdraw his force both from Manika and from the territory of any chief with whom treaties had been concluded by the British South Africa

Company. This letter Colonel d'Andrada declined to answer.

Three days later, without any warning, Gouveia occupied the Chief Umtassa's kraal with some seventy of his armed followers. Forbes, on hearing that Gouveia had established himself at the king's kraal, at once sent him a letter protesting against his presence there, and warning him that any attempt to coerce the chief into granting interviews would be defiance of his orders, which were to prevent any outside interference with the Chief Umtassa; and these orders he was prepared, if necessary, to carry out by force. To this letter Gouveia verbally replied that he should go where he liked and that no Englishman should stop him. The daily expected reinforcements of the Company's police had not arrived, and with only a handful of men at his disposal Forbes deemed it inadvisable to attempt to eject Gouveia from Umtassa's stronghold, situated, as has been said, in a mountain fastness difficult of access. Meanwhile Colonel d'Andrada and the Baron de Rezende, with a large number of well-armed followers, went inside Umtassa's stockaded kraal. In spite of Forbes' protests, news reached him on the 14th that both Colonel d'Andrada and Baron de Rezende had, with 200 armed native followers, joined Gouveia at Umtassa's kraal, the last-named having persisted in remaining there with the avowed object of intimidating the chief into a repudiation of the treaty. Forbes at once decided to put an end by a *coup de main* to the persistent action of the Portuguese in coercing and menacing the Company's friendly ally. With an escort of twelve men he proceeded direct to the king's kraal, and meeting the Baron de Rezende at the threshold informed him that he was to consider himself a prisoner. Penetrating behind the thick palisade of rough poles among the numerous huts of the now alarmed and excited natives (who rushed to their arms and ran about wildly in all directions) the representatives of the Company's police proceeded in their search, and within a

short time arrested Colonel d'Andrada and Gouveia (the former highly indignant and protesting volubly), persuading them that resistance was useless and that they must proceed under escort to his camp. Meanwhile the second party, a few hundred yards off, were busy carrying out the task assigned to them of disarming the armed "bearers" of the Portuguese. The scene was an animated one. Upon the appearance of this party and in the absence of their leader (Gouveia) complete demoralisation ensued among his followers. Thus was effected, quietly but firmly, without the firing of a shot or the loss of a single life, an effective *coup de main* destined to have important consequences not only as regards Manika but the position of the British South Africa Company generally. The plan of campaign of this "peaceful mission" of the Portuguese was to have been as follows: Umtassa, after being brought to a proper frame of mind by the persuasive presence of Gouveia for some days, was, on the arrival of Colonel d'Andrada and Baron de Rezende, in full *induba*, to have made the astounding statement that twenty years ago (in return for Gouveia's "saving his life"—that is for services rendered him by Gouveia in helping him in some "war" with a neighbouring chief) he had sent an "elephant's tusk full of earth" to Gouveia with the words, "Take my country—but come and save me."

Colonel d'Andrada protested that he was there on a peaceable mission as director of the Mozambique Company, accompanied by his friend Gouveia, an employee of the company, and the Baron de Rezende, the local agent; they were there merely to discuss certain questions in connection with the mining interests of the company. Similar protests Colonel d'Andrada repeated later, resulting in an action taken against the British South Africa Company. These assurances, however, were hardly reconcilable with the fact that the "bearers" carried not only arms but side-arms; that orders had actually been

given to barricade the enclosure gateways, and not only to offer resistance to the approach of any English to the chief's kraal, but to drive by force the small body of the Company's police out of Manika—"peaceable" designs happily frustrated by the sudden and vigorous action taken by Forbes.

That officer decided to despatch Colonel d'Andrada and Gouveia to Fort Salisbury, for to have released them upon parole in the Manika country would have been a fatal mistake. Such an action would have been attributed by the natives to weakness, and might have led to a dangerous rising among Gouveia's people in the Gorongosa province, whilst the arrest and deportation of the much-dreaded Gouveia by a handful of the Company's police could not but raise British prestige not only in Manika but throughout the whole of South-Eastern Africa. The next day Colonel d'Andrada and Gouveia were accordingly despatched as prisoners on parole to Fort Salisbury. It was decided that Baron de Rezende (also placed on parole) should be allowed to return to Massi-Kessi. Meanwhile Forbes occupied that place quietly and without any show of resistance. He had taken with him Baron de Rezende and M. de Llamby, an engineer of the Mozambique Company. On their arrival at Massi-Kessi both these gentlemen were released on parole, and Massi-Kessi was, as stated, temporarily occupied by a small detachment of the Company's forces. Massi-Kessi, it may here be mentioned, was nothing but a trading station and stockaded compound, built by the Baron de Rezende in his capacity of local representative of the Mozambique Company. Upon the arrival at Fort Salisbury of Colonel d'Andrada and Gouveia, a prolonged interview with myself resulted in their being sent down country for the instructions of Mr. Rhodes and the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch. The time involved by this journey, which must have seemed long and tedious to them, was exactly what we wanted to consolidate our position. From first

to last the prisoners were treated with scrupulous courtesy, as d'Andrada himself acknowledged, and every consideration was shown them by the Company's officials that was possible under somewhat embarrassing circumstances.

Writing long after the event, I am still of opinion, as I was then, that the steps taken by me were expedient. It must be remembered that our position in the country was by no means an assured one—exposed to the suspicion and animosity of the Matabele on the west, the jealousy and envy of the Boers on the south, and the resentment of the Portuguese on the east and north-east. The arrest and deportation of these Portuguese officers removed a possible cause of danger to the existence of the new colony.

The incident caused great excitement in Portugal, and raised a bitter feeling against England. It is unnecessary to refer, except in the briefest terms, to the occurrences of that time. Bands of student volunteers were raised in Lisbon, and amid a whirlwind of patriotic demonstration sent off to Beira, at the mouth of the Pungwé, with the apparent intention of marching on Manika and ejecting the British. Nothing came of all these warlike preparations beyond an attack on the Company's border police post at Umtali, in Manika (on May 11, 1891) when the Portuguese force was repulsed by Captain Heyman and a small number of our police.

The difficulties between England and Portugal were, after much further negotiation, happily ended by the ratification of a new agreement, dated June 11, 1891. This agreement, which gave Mashonaland access to the port of Beira through the Portuguese territory, together with the agreement concluded with Germany in the previous year, brought about a general arrangement of Central and Southern Africa between the Powers interested in that region. It was, of course, a great drawback that Rhodesia could not secure a coast line, and a great deal of our thoughts and energies in the first months of

our occupation were bent to this end. It was expected by the Company that the British Government would support us in any concession we might have obtained "even down to the sea coast," but unfortunately the Portuguese position in Beira was too well defined, or at all events I thought so. Had I cared to despatch a filibustering expedition to seize Beira I could have done so but, as I was now perfectly aware, with the certainty that in the case of accident I should be disavowed. The temper displayed by the Portuguese over the affair of Umtassa's kraal was, moreover, a plain indication of possible complications. I think I forgot to mention that our prisoner, d'Andrada, turned out to be a near relation of some very high personages, and his private influence, which extended beyond his own country, was highly inconvenient.

I must now go back to the point when I rejoined the Pioneer column at Mount Hampden, soon after which we moved on to Salisbury. The prospectors began to spread over the country—at least, many of them. Others, who had expected to find gold in chunks ready to be picked up, squatted in their waggons and waited for the liquor to arrive. All had been given three months' rations by the Company but were expected to find meat for themselves, and I find in a plaintive letter from the officer left in command when I went away to inspect the country, that these so-called prospectors surrounded him day and night asking him for meat, "Of which," he adds with some misgivings, "I really have none to give." Within a few weeks of our arrival the rains set in, and were unusually severe that year. The rivers rose in our rear and cut our communications, and as we had travelled very light, expecting waggons of supplies to follow, we were soon on short commons. Meat was to be had for the shooting, but native meal was difficult to obtain and we had not the trading stuff to barter for it. Tea, coffee, sugar, and even salt we ran out of at headquarters, and the

prospectors were short of everything and suffered severely from malarial fever. In short, we had a very rough time. I had one anxious week, having gone out to a mining camp with a brother of Dr. Jameson. We were isolated by the river, which was in spate in front, and by the track behind us, impassable from the heavy rain. We took shelter in a hut and subsisted on the scanty food we were carrying and what the natives in a kraal could give us, but it was a trying experience.

Our position at Salisbury became so desperate that at last I was forced to send an expedition to Tete, a Portuguese trading post on the Zambesi, and thence they brought up a couple of waggon loads of supplies, but the journey was a terrible one at that time of year and cost several lives. As soon as the rains were over conditions improved very much and the work of organisation proceeded apace. Among the steps to be taken were the formation of a headquarters at Salisbury, the establishment of postal communication, the laying out of townships, the creation of mining districts with commissioners, the dealing with applications for mining rights and licences, the adjustment of disputes among the settlers, the establishment of hospitals, the preparation and introduction of mining and other laws and regulations, the initiation of a survey, the opening out of roads to the various mining centres, and the despatch of missions to native chiefs.

Naturally, under the conditions of laying the foundation stone of a colony, in which commercial interests were so largely represented, there were many strings being pulled, many intrigues, and a certain amount of friction, but the general behaviour, especially of the police, was excellent. My own position was not an easy one by any means, for I was between Scylla and Charybdis. On the one hand a body of settlers who were not under the same control as they would have been in a Crown colony, and over whom during the first few months, until provisional laws and





## BECHUANALAND EXPLORATION COMPANY, LIMITED.

## MEMORANDUM.

From

The Director in Charge.

At

Pulapye.

To

Pulapye. Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup> 1890.

My dear Colquhoun.

Saucon will bother you from the King wanting to mark out a royal piece of ground the very foot of the request is an admission of our position.

out. so that we cannot allow the  
ground to be taken. But you can  
answer him civilly and adopt  
his way of proffering a question  
I should not like to be rude to him

It is of course a scheme of the  
White Intriguers at Badungo.  
I hear Dawson left about three  
days ago. so he may turn up at  
any time. at Mt. Harpden.

You will see Moffat name on  
letter but he merely put it to  
show that it is a letter from  
Sobeyakue to you

Yr (-). Rhodes



regulations had been promulgated, I had no real power ; and on the other my employers who were not accustomed to the forms and procedure usual in official communications—a fact which enormously increased my work. The principle of undivided control pressed for by me was not recognised, partly, I think, because Rhodes was anxious from the first that his *alter ego*, Jameson, who would be able as no one else could to interpret his policy, should really control the destiny of the colony although he could not spare him for the initial spade work. Jameson was occupied in journeying to and fro and in affairs of high policy, and was only in Mashonaland for a very short time during my tenure of office, but he was appointed managing-director, and after I left he took over the administration. My departure in the autumn of 1891 was rendered necessary by the fact that I could not face another rainy season without leave, having suffered severely from the strain of the work and the hardships involved. At the same time it was found practicable to disband the military force, Colonel Pennefather and other officers returning to their regiments. “Pat” Forbes remained in charge of a volunteer force nominally 500 strong, now the only force, military or police, in the country—a sure indication that our first year had been successful in establishing the colony on a secure and peaceful foundation. Appended is a facsimile letter from Mr. Rhodes, one of the few I ever received in his own writing—the labour evinced in the heavy irregular scrawl is indicative of his dislike for the manual labour of writing. There is no secret history involved, though it is an amusing little sidelight on the sort of question we had to tackle, and the difficulties in our path—by no means always of native origin.

Among the young fellows who went up with us was Morier, a son of the ambassador and grandson of “Hadji Baba,” a very gallant and handsome young fellow, whose death—he disappeared, and it was thought he had been carried off by a lion—we all deplored. Another trooper,

who acted as my secretary for some time, was Pat Campbell, the husband of a lady who had not yet made her fame on the stage. Campbell was very good-looking and one of the finest horsemen I ever saw. I sent him alone with a despatch concerning Manika from Umtassa to Palapwe, and he rode the whole way, some four hundred odd miles, with scarcely a break. I recollect seeing in his possession the lovely photographs of a lady and child, both of them now well known on the stage. Poor Pat Campbell is buried in Rhodesia.

In 1907 the Rhodesian Pioneers had their first commemorative dinner, which will, we hope, become an annual function. About seventeen were present, and as our chairman, genial Frank Johnson, remarked, none of us are living in Park Lane! We have a representative in the House of Commons, but for the most part we are obscure persons working hard for a living! Pioneers, like inventors, seldom make much of the game—it is the people who come immediately after. Personally, I made the usual mess of my chances. Some Chartered shares had been allotted me in part payment of my services, and could I have sold these in 1891, when they went up like rockets, I should have cleared a nice little competence, but owing to my absence in Mashonaland I was unable to act at the right moment. Then came a period of depression, and I was squeezed out, selling at a little over what I had paid, and clearing only a couple of thousand out of the transaction, which was done in my usual blundering way. I promptly invested this and anything else I could scrape up in “real estate” in Georgia, U.S.A. The estate was real enough, but the profits were *nil*! More of this by-and-by. In any case, I did not make a fortune by my second venture in life any more than by my first.

At Cape Town I stayed with Rhodes at his famous house, Groot Schuur, once a granary, as its name implies, and for long in the possession of the Hofmeyr family. When he became Prime Minister in '90 he tenanted the

house and bought it a couple of years later. In '96 it was burnt down and restored by Baker in the form which it now wears—larger and more elaborate, but in the style of the old house. No one who ever saw Groot Schuur, even in those early days, could forget it—the avenue of pines and oaks, the scrolled white gable-ends, quaint windows and moulded chimney-pots, the foreground of Dutch garden, and at the back the three terraces with their fringe of pines and great clumps of arum lilies. Behind it all the bush-clad slopes topped by the *krantzes* of Table Mountain and the Devil's Peak—a wonderful site for a house and a wonderful house for the site.

The interior was more homely and comfortable than elaborate, and the modern house seemed to me in 1904 less of a home and more of a museum, which of course it is since the master left it. Much of the old furniture now contained in it was collected from all parts of South Africa for the new house. Rhodes was always fond of old things and especially of curios, and every visitor saw the wooden bowl brought from Zimbabwe, and the curious carved birds, which he liked to believe were Phallic symbols. There was a coin of Antoninus Pius from the same treasure trove. More interesting to me was the library, a really good one, containing many classics and good modern series, such as the "History of the Nations." The table was very good, and the service, on a modest scale with one white manservant and coloured underlings, was quite adequate.

Groot Schuur was, from the first, the scene of great hospitality. At the time of my visit Rhodes was engaged in the heavy task of placating the Dutch element and keeping them in hand, while the northern expansion was being carried out, and at the same time soothing the susceptibilities of the British Afrianders who could not but fear that the northern expansion might lead to a shifting of the centre of gravity and thus leave the Cape stranded and isolated in South Africa. Consequently on :

met at Groot Schuur not only the Bond leaders but politicians of every shade. Jan Hofmeyr, the "Mole," quiet and secretive but bearing the reputation (which I think he deserved) of being the straightest man in South Africa, was very often there, and John X. Merriman, the brilliant Englishman, who was to identify himself with the Bond and is now Prime Minister, was another interesting figure. Merriman was at this time a great friend of Rhodes and took many morning rides with him—a friendship which terminated abruptly and left bitterness behind when Rhodes "betrayed the Dutch." Merriman is one of the wittiest and most caustic of men, but like many others of his calibre is, I think, best in opposition. He is credited with having spoken of "The sons of Belial—I mean Balliol!" to indicate the young British officials who were his *bêtes noires* when introduced by Lord Milner after the war. Balliol men remain "sons of Belial" to this day without any reflection on their characters!

Another witty Biblical perversion related to the demand of a section of the Cape farmers for some facilities for the transport of agricultural produce. Although they did not get what they wanted the minister for railways, in a gracious speech, promised to carry local building materials at reduced rates. "You have asked for bread and he gives you a stone!" was Merriman's apt comment.

Other men I met were "Dickie" (later Sir Richard) Solomon, Attorney-General for the Transvaal and Lieutenant-Governor after the war and now Agent-General; Rose Innes, then Attorney-General, now Chief Justice of the Transvaal; Judge Lange, M.P. for Kimberley; Sir Sidney Shippard, Administrator of Bechuanaland; Sir Charles Metcalfe, engineer to the Cape to Cairo railway and a great friend of Rhodes; Sievwright, Sauer, Schreiner (brother of the authoress of "An African Farm" and, it is said, largely responsible for that brilliant book) with hosts of others. Rhodes's first Government broke up in 1892, owing to the resignation of Merriman, Sauer and



Innes over what was known as the Logan contract—a contract for refreshment rooms on the railway lines given by the Minister for Public Works without calling for tenders. The Government cancelled the contract, but Logan brought the case before the Supreme Court and won it. My acquaintance with some of these men was renewed during a later visit, but not at Groot Schuur! The turn of Fortune's wheel had made many—too many—of them hostile to all for which Groot Schuur stands in the mind of Afrianders. But I think Cecil Rhodes will hold his place in South African hearts, despite what the Dutch termed his treachery, for whatever his mistakes he made his home in South Africa, he loved it, and understood its people, and—for a time at all events—was one with them.

On my way down I had met Lord Randolph Churchill on his last melancholy journey, and had two hours' conversation with him. One could not help being pained by the obvious signs of disease and mental wear and tear. Only this year a paper on our East African Empire was read by me at the Colonial Institute, at which Lord Randolph's son, now a Cabinet minister, took the chair. I could not help thinking of my last interview with his father.

This was, though I did not suppose it for a moment, the last time I ever saw Cecil Rhodes. He was very kind and cordial to me, and offered me six months' leave and the option of returning to my post if I liked; but I felt that the avenues to promotion in that direction were few and the conditions of service not such as would suit me. I was, however, given by him six months' leave on full pay, though it was understood that I was not coming back. I do not think my decision about Rhodesia was unwise. The development of the country was not to proceed on ordinary lines, since the administration was complicated by the financial question. Rhodes originally believed that the country was so heavily mineralised from end to end as to be a certain success from the start, and counted on finding

a second *banket* reef which would at once bring in a large and prosperous community. Had he known, as he knew later, that though the country is "mineralised from end to end" the gold deposit is of a character to make its exploitation an industry, but not an Eldorado, he would have followed an entirely different policy. He meant the mines to act as a magnet to population and capital, and thought the development of the country would follow. Now it has become patent that Rhodesia must depend on her land as well as her minerals, but the first false steps have to be painfully recovered, and Rhodesia's prospects, after eighteen years, are still unrealised though much has been done in the country and its possibilities are as great as ever. Under the abnormal conditions attending the early development of Rhodesia, I do not see in what direction a career would have opened to me. Business ability, essential in dealing with the complicated situation, was lacking on my part, and I had an utter distaste for the atmosphere of mining speculation and company promoting which pervaded the country. Moreover, although much attracted by the climate and the country I could not, after my experiences in the East, enjoy the task of dealing with natives who had to all seeming neither a history nor a future. I have always been proud to have played a part, however humble, in securing a part of this country for the Empire; but when the pioneer stage was over, and the patriotic *motif* had to be subordinated to the question of dividends, my first enthusiasm began to wane. In short, I was not drawn towards the work in Rhodesia by any strong attractions, and from the point of view of worldly success I have never had reason to deplore the fact that I decided not to return. Rhodesia has not proved an avenue to promotion or distinction, and the expense of living has always handicapped those to whom salary is a consideration.

Revisiting Rhodesia the other day, I was amused at the question of a youngster who asked me where "Government

House" was in my time? Mine was a mud hut with a thatched roof, and I wrote home that it was extremely comfortable and actually had windows, as I knew from the draughts—no glass, but a sheet of cotton nailed over the framework. I contemplated a more elaborate establishment, and had thoughts of importing my step-mother and youngest half-sister to preside over it, but I warned them that no ladies had entered the country as yet and that of trained service there was none. The men who fared best were those who, like Selous, had Zulu body servants who had followed them for years and knew how to provide for a rough kind of comfort. My step-mother, in answer to my suggestion, wrote that I might marry, to which I replied—and the statement is extant to prove the vanity of a man's judgment on himself—"I shall never marry. I am too old, in spirit as well as in years, to venture on such an undertaking." Had I but known, the lady who was to change my mind on this subject had just become acquainted with my family circle, and on my return to London my fate was decided, although the event tarried some seven years.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

THE return to England in the middle of the winter was not well calculated, for nothing depresses one more after the clear African sky than the grey pall which too often spreads over these islands during the months between November and April. I was, however, anxious to see my step-mother and brothers and sisters and to learn their plans for the future, for I had half a mind to settle down with them somewhere and devote myself to literature.

It may be mentioned here that, after such a long experience of hot damp and hot dry climates—in India, Burma and Africa—I felt the cold in England and Scotland severely for some time, but curiously enough I have quite outgrown this and wear lighter clothes every winter. I attribute this very largely to the habit, acquired after I had reached fifty, of sleeping with not only the window but the door open, and a free circulation of fresh air round me all night. Even more extraordinary is the fact that in the last few years I have started to take quite cold baths. Under this *régime* I am free from colds. In my boyhood in Scotland the bath tub was not a morning institution. We had a hot bath on Saturday night. Bathrooms were unknown in any house of my acquaintance, and the labour of tubbing a number of children was considerable. In the East I took the usual tepid bath, and on my return home I felt as if complete immersion in cold water would have been the death of me. Men who have spent only a year or two in India have the same idea, as I found with a youngster of my own acquaintance who stayed in my house before and after his first spell of service in India.

He had been accustomed all his life to cold baths and, when asked before he started how he would like his morning tub prepared, he replied with scorn, "Am I a girl? Cold, of course." On his return three years later we asked him, "Cold, of course?" and he grinned and said: "Not if I know it!" It is the more strange that I should be able to take to cold baths and open air treatment because after my return from America I had an attack of rheumatic fever which kept me in bed for five months and might have been expected to impair my vitality. I mention these intimate details because of the benefit I have derived from a gradual but thorough return to a method of living which is suitable to this climate, and these hints may be useful to others who, like myself, have spent their best years in hot countries. Certainly no one could have better health, for in the last dozen years I have only twice been confined to bed for a day or two.

While in South Africa I had continued to act as occasional correspondent to the *Times*, and in Mashonaland I had run a small Press bureau and had supplied half-a-dozen of the leading home papers with news of the expedition. My connection with the Press was, in fact, one of my qualifications for my post in the eyes of Rhodes, who knew the importance of keeping up public interest and sympathy in the pioneering of Rhodesia. I never lost sight of the possibility of turning again to my pen, and on my return went a good deal into literary and journalistic circles, especially at the house of my friend and publisher, Andrew Tuer, who knew everyone in the literary and artistic worlds, and whose house was a museum of beautiful things which he had collected.

His brothers-in-law, Sam and Duncan Louttit, were my great friends: big, genial men, full of human interest and sympathy. Both they and Andrew Tuer have, alas! joined the majority, and Mrs. S. Louttit, after a life of devotion first to her husband and then to his brother, has also gone. I think she was the wittiest woman I have ever met,

certainly she had the gift of making the most commonplace topics piquant by the way she discussed them, and the turn of her humour was dry and biting like that of some cynical man. Her descriptions of things and people were irresistibly comic. I always recollect the account she gave of her introduction to her family-in-law, all the members of which were considerably above the usual stature, while she was a tiny little woman. "I felt like a chicken among elephants, and kept on hopping about for fear one of them should put a foot on me!" All the members of this delightful circle were strongly gifted with humour, and a good story, even against themselves, was never allowed to pass. Among their many guests was Norman Maccoll, for thirty or more years editor of the *Athenæum*, who had a charming small house near by, and also gave delightful parties. One day a stranger was looking at Tuer's beautiful collection of Bartolozzi prints and said politely: "What lovely things you have, Mr. Tuer!" Maccoll, in his dry little voice, grunted out: "Red with the blood of authors!" No one laughed more heartily than Andrew Tuer himself, and he added, "Now, Barabbas was a publisher!" and used to tell the story afterwards, imitating Maccoll's peculiar nasal voice. I remember a curious coincidence in connection with Maccoll which happened at my own table. A lady who was expected did not arrive till very late, and we were sitting down to table when she came in. Theatrical matters were being discussed, and the name of the American actress, Eleanor Calhoun, was mentioned. "Miss Calhoun," grunted Maccoll, "is not only a very handsome woman but a very clever one!" There was a moment's silence, and our lady guest, flushing with pleasure, said: "Oh, thank you, that's the best compliment I ever had!" It was Miss Eleanor Calhoun herself, who was not known personally to Maccoll. Another amusing thing happened at this same dinner-party (which took place some years after the actual date reached in

this autobiography). Two gentlemen were present who had the most beautiful thick silvery hair, and my wife after dinner said laughingly to them, "I wish you would give me the receipt for Archie!" One of them replied, "Well, I have no receipt!" but the other said: "I will send you mine some day!" Then the first remarked: "Perhaps you think it doesn't grow—you can pull it if you like!" And the two laughed together while she made a pretence of patting their silver locks. Now, the joke was that the second man wore a *toupée*—a fact only known to one of his most intimate friends, who divulged the fact to me after his death. When my wife told the other white-headed friend about this he was exceedingly astonished, and insisted that she should satisfy herself that his hair was really his own.

The spring of 1892 found me enjoying a holiday in England practically for the first time. It will be remembered that on my first furlough home (in 1881) I only stayed a few months and did a lot of work in that time; my second stay (in 1882) was as short, and even more strenuous; while the third, before I went out to Upper Burma, was only some five months, and during that time I was writing and lecturing incessantly. Naturally, the period (from August to November in 1889) which preceded my sudden departure for South Africa was too anxious a time to be enjoyed, so that I had practically never in my life had a complete rest from work, travel, and worry. The London season being on, and my step-mother and her youngest girl now in town, I much enjoyed the novel experience of taking them about. My sister was then studying at the studio of Ludovici, and I was invited to teas there and used sometimes to go to fetch her. It was a joke against me that I did not fancy studio teas, expressing doubts as to whether the cups had been properly washed, and declaring that the cake tasted of palette-knife! But fate lurked behind the teacups and the painty cake, and a very young lady in a red overall succeeded in

impressing her image on my not very susceptible heart. I arranged *parties carrées*, in which she was included, but I fear I did not make the most of my opportunities, for she assures me that at Earl's Court in the evening, under the fairy lights and to the music of a Strauss waltz, I discussed with her the unification of Germany and the work accomplished by von Stein! The end of this episode came with a party up the river, which was to have been an idyll, but turned out a *fiasco*. We started from Westbourne Park in a light drizzle and the carriage packed to suffocation. Our party—one of my carefully-planned fours—was unexpectedly increased by the untimely appearance of a young brother and a friend, who insisted on joining us. The brother could have been choked off, but the friend, for reasons of his own, was impervious to my hints. We reached Henley in a downpour. We walked along the river bank through torrents of rain. We lunched at the hotel in dryness and comfort, but by this time my temper was horrid, for to add to everything I had a liver attack! After lunch we sat in a damp summer-house, and even the geniality of Duncan Louttit could not dispel the gloom which had settled over us. The guest of the occasion decided that I must be a very unpleasant man to live with, and on our arrival back in town—the sun came out as we reached it—she elected to be escorted home by Duncan! We were not to meet again for seven years.

My unfortunate lack of method in compiling notes or diaries makes it difficult to fix the dates and places at which I met people, but perhaps some random recollections may be included here. Sir Richard and Lady Burton I met on more than one occasion, the first time at the dinner-table of John Macdonald. Burton was then sixty years of age, a man of herculean frame with a massive head and shoulders, a very dark complexion and a scarred face with strong nose and chin. His wife was still a handsome woman, though rather stout, whose adoration for Richard was very evident. Both in appearance and



character Burton was out of place in a mid-Victorian drawing-room—he belonged to the spacious eighteenth century. Imperious and sometimes vain, he was sympathetic and generous to the work of others, but the strongest effect he produced on one when met in society was that he was rather obviously trying to shock and scandalise his hearers with his Rabelaisian humour. His tales when the ladies had withdrawn—luckily in those days they always “withdrew”—were “scorchers,” but even in ordinary conversation he was intolerant of *les convenances*. It is curious that this born adventurer, a fine swordsman, horseman, wrestler—indeed proficient in all the arts of self-defence—was never destined to see active service. I don’t think he ever saw a shot fired in action. It was probably this, added to his constitutional restlessness, which caused him to throw up his army career. When he first went out to India he was known in his regiment as the “white nigger” because, not satisfied with the ordinary regimental routine, he chose to live among the natives and indulge his extraordinary taste for learning languages.

Another adventurous spirit of a different calibre with whom I was acquainted was the American, Stillman, who started life as a landscape painter. In 1852 he went on behalf of Louis Kossuth to Hungary to carry away the Crown jewels, which had been hidden during the revolution. Later he was United States consul at Rome and in Greece, but took to literature and then joined the *Times*. From his conversation I got my first interest in the politics of South-Eastern Europe and in the Balkans generally. I think I met him at Sir Edwin Arnold’s house, a very hospitable one, where the family circle formed rather an amusing mutual admiration society. Arnold’s second wife, the daughter of Dr. Channing, a well-known Boston preacher, was talented and constantly dilated on the genius of her husband, while he led one round to admire her paintings, and the rest of the household sat

and worshipped at both the shrines! Arnold accumulated a perfect museum of foreign (chiefly Eastern) orders which were a great topic of conversation.

After a short time life in England began to bore me. My future course was still undecided, but in any case I was restless for fresh fields and pastures new. Having a sister and brother in America and many friends, and feeling that to understand *Welt Politik* (which was my desire) it was essential to see the West as well as the East, I packed up my traps and started for America, travelling all over not only the Northern but the Southern States, and spending many months with my sister in Atlanta, Georgia, where she lived for the education of her children. I was immensely entertained by my American nephews and nieces, for the freedom of manner and many of the social customs were strange to me. I remember vividly my sensations when, in a house where my sister and I were calling one evening, some young fellows arrived to see the girls of the family, and our hostess rose from her comfortable "rocker" and said to us, "Well, I guess we had better go into the back parlour and leave the young folks to enjoy themselves!"

So many charming novels have been written which give pictures of social conditions in the Southern States after "the s'render" that it is perhaps foolish for me to add my stone to the cairn, but I cannot forget the vivid impression made on me at this time. Coming from the Northern States, where the whole atmosphere was full of work, hustle, money, enterprise, and nervous tension, I dropped into a society where the principal occupation seemed to be the struggle to make both ends meet on the most slender resources, and yet where worldly success was of less account than an honourable name and ancestry. From the atmosphere of equality—an equality in which, as has been well said, every man is "as good as another and a bit better"—I came into a social world full of subtle class distinctions. The fact that everyone "in society" was poor

did not detract from their claims on consideration based on their family position. In no society in Europe would one meet with a greater degree of aristocratic exclusiveness, though it was kept up with a delicate high-bred absence of assumption. One recognised at once that the underlying principle of this society was the fact that, like Englishmen in India or Burma, the "best people" were a *sahib* class, living among a race of inferior civilisation. The destruction of the fabric of their society by the entire reversal of social conditions in the "reconstruction period" had driven them to what appeared like an exaggeration of the sense of caste—in the struggle to preserve their position.

It was impossible not to admire the beautiful Southern women, many of whom toiled in menial capacities during the day but received in the evening in their refined if shabby homes, and entertained us with the gaiety and ease of those to whom social intercourse is the chief affair of life. I remember one woman particularly, delicate and fragile in appearance, who had been a great belle in her youth and the mistress of a fine establishment in her early married years. She hawked books for sale during the day. It was only the shadow in her eyes that gave any indication of her sufferings when she entertained her callers in the evening. It was not "good form" to talk about "better days" or indeed to draw attention, directly or indirectly, to the fact that everything was not as it should be. Among men, however, the conversation ran greatly on the struggle many were having to keep the remnant of their estates. The word "mortgage" was ominously familiar and hung over our spirits like a pall. Bitterness against the North had not by any means died out, and a Northerner was still a foreigner and an outsider, not to be tolerated as a son-in-law, though young folks sometimes thought differently. I wonder if any of these old-world communities are still to be found, or if the great industrial expansion of the South has swept them away on a wave of prosperity! The generation then growing up was not

likely to perpetuate either the sentiments or the prejudices of their parents, or the pathetic futility of their attitude towards the forces at work in their country.

Among my most interesting experiences was a visit to the old home of John C. Calhoun, the celebrated Southern statesman, in the hills of South Carolina. The house, a modest one, but beautifully situated, was, I think, preserved by the piety of his descendants as a relic of him. The walls were hung with portraits, and a valuable collection of his letters was preserved in strong boxes, at which I was allowed to have a look. My sister and I were specially interested to find out if he belonged to the same family as ourselves, and from the correspondence gathered that this was actually the case, though his forbears had come to America *viâ* Donegal, where they were settled for some generations. All the Colquhouns, Calhoons and other variants of the name must be, in fact, descended from the Loch Lomond clan, though I am not prepared to say that the original Kilpatrick who got the Colchune lands may not have come from Ireland!

In John Calhoun's face we thought could be traced the traditional family features, and particularly the high-bridged nose and fine forehead which were so marked in my own father. He had a French mother, whose beautiful portrait, full of life and spirit, also hung on the walls, and from her he got the flashing dark eye which was one of his characteristics. I feel proud to be able to claim kinship with one of America's greatest men, whom I have always admired not only as a statesman but as a philosopher, and I was much interested to meet the handsome and talented descendant of his, Miss Eleanor Calhoun, to whom reference has already been made.

Atlanta, where my sister lived, had only recently started on the career of industrial expansion which now makes it a great railway and manufacturing centre. While I was there I went up to see the Chicago Exhibition, and heard an amusing story illustrating the coolness of an Atlantan

animated by Southern pride. A Yankee said to him, "You come from Atlanta? Busy little place! We always call it the Chicago of the South!" "You don't say!" answered the Southerner; "I call that a genuine coincidence. We always call Chicago the Atlanta of the No'th!" I was told also—a less authenticated story—that a Chicago man died and came in due course to a Certain Place. A spirit met him at the gate and showed him over his new abode. He saw miles and miles of business quarters and streets, and the more he saw the more enthusiastic he became. "Why, Heaven is better than Chicago," he cried. The spirit answered, "This is not Heaven!"

Being determined to see something of America outside the towns, I made several journeys by rail and buck-board and stopped at farm houses, meeting of course none but Americans, and even in towns and hotels avoiding the few Britons who might be seen there. I found my country and people excessively unpopular, and my own passport to favour was the fact that I was "Scoto-Irish"—the generic term for all Celts in America. Had I been English my welcome would have been a very poor one, and I was often forced to listen to a criticism of my country which was founded on the perverted information conveyed in the Press and the school books of the day. My own nephews and nieces waved the Stars and Stripes under my nose and rubbed in the iniquities we had committed on every possible occasion, the fact that both their father and mother were British weighing nothing against their own poignant sense of American nationality. This was my first glimpse of a subject which has been much discussed since then—the power of this great country for digesting aliens and turning them out American citizens. No traveller in the United States has failed to be struck by the inculcation of patriotism in the schools, and its effect on the children of immigrants. In Boston I met an Englishman whose loyalty to his own nation had never even permitted him to take out naturalisation papers,

though he was settled there for life. One day, walking over Boston Common with his small boy, aged seven, the latter gave his father a little shove and said slyly, pointing with his finger, "That's where *we* whopped *you*, poppa!"

An Irish lady of my acquaintance whose parents settled in Virginia when she was nearly grown up, volunteered one day to take a geography class in school for one of the teachers who was ill. The subject was Europe. She stood up before the map and, pointing to it, began, "Europe is the smallest but the most important of the continents——" She never finished the sentence. The class rose as one child and mobbed her, and as she would not retract, the lesson had to be abandoned.

A great improvement has, I believe, taken place in the school books, which give a more just appreciation of Great Britain without detracting from American pride in their own national achievements. I say I "believe," because only three years ago I had occasion to dip into some "Readers," and found a *rechauffé* of stories about English cruelty to American prisoners which may be historically accurate, but are given an entirely false perspective by being taken out of their context and served up for the consumption of children to whom such anecdotes are apt to be far more vivid than the greater movements of which they are part. At the period of my first visit the education of the negro was only just beginning to engage attention, and was violently opposed by many people in the South. I recollect many stories of the hardships and even dangers encountered by the Northern school-maids who had to be imported to teach the negro schools. At a later date much time and consideration were devoted by me to this "Black problem," but it is too involved for any discussion here. I may say that my acquaintance with the South, and the conditions of life of a small white population living in the midst of a black cloud, prevented me from adopting the Northern attitude, but at the same time I have always felt, in Africa as in America, that the negro

race must be helped on an upward path of civilisation. A witty definition of the attitude of the North and South respectively towards the negro problem runs as follows: "The North sympathises with *the* negro—the South with *a* negro." This was the epigram of a coloured man, and it is true, for while the negro in the abstract—in principle—appeals to the theoretic justice of the Northerner, the colour line is really drawn hard-and-fast in the North as in the South, while in the latter long and often affectionate association with black people as servants and nurses makes the Southerner kinder and more sympathetic to individual negroes. I remember the affectionate familiarity of the old mammies and field hands on my sister's plantation in Alabama, and their intimate acquaintance with the family affairs, which they regarded as their own. Many of them, of course, had been born in slavery, for this was only thirty years after the war. I particularly like the story of the old negro butler who, thinking one of his young mistresses was neglecting a guest at dinner, took occasion to whisper to her, "A little more *condensation* to de right, missy!" Everyone knows the part played by negro servants in running the estates when their masters went to the war, and often acting as the sole supports and protectors of white mistresses when the latter lost their own men folk. I regret to say my sister writes to me that the black people have now grown so insolent and insubordinate that it is not considered safe for a white lady to live on a plantation unprotected. I have a lively recollection of the surprise shown by an American lady a few years since in the West Indies, when she saw white women living on lonely plantations from which their husbands or sons were often absent for days at a time. One lady was asked, "Are you not frightened?" She replied, in all good faith, "Oh, no! there are plenty of hands on the estate, and so few white loafers come this way!" And there is no Judge Lynch in Jamaica!

The farming population of Ohio, where I also visited,

was a great contrast to that of Georgia or Carolina. In the former I was driven in smart buck-boards, behind spanking horses, and the houses of my hosts were full of homely comfort, and not a few contained books and music. The food was plentiful and good of its sort, but oh! the horrible indigestion induced by American middle-class cooking. In the South, where traditions of creole cookery linger, one gets the most delicious food in the world, and the tables of the rich in the Eastern towns are most delicately furnished, but the genuine middle-class fare is only fit for an ostrich. Visions of "pie," of rich and oily turkeys with highly seasoned stuffing and sweet sauce, of steaks like leather and hot cakes like lead, of strong tea and weak coffee drunk in gallons with these meals, of fat boiled bacon and beans swimming in grease—the very memory gives me dyspepsia! A patent "liver cure" is a sure cut to fortune in America! The farming communities were sociable, the whole tone of life full and free—a delightful country and people. The Southern farmers, on the contrary, scattered and isolated, struggling against adverse labour conditions and backward in their methods, were often ground down to that hopeless level of agricultural poverty which is the worst of all. Amusements were scarce, intellects were starved. The Sunday paper represented all they knew of the outside world. The poor white communities of the hill country presented the gravest social problem, and I do not think this blot on American civilisation has yet been removed, judging from the reports I have recently seen of the Hargis feud. These family feuds have their counterpart in such countries as Sicily to-day, but the whole condition of the people who harbour them is more reminiscent of the highland clans of Scotland in ruder times.

The lawlessness displayed by these American highlanders, often degenerate and absolutely ignorant "poor whites," living in a semi-primitive manner in the mountains,



but cherishing the traditions of "family," provides picturesque material for the sensational journalist or novelist. "Judge" Jim Hargis, with his twenty or more notches on his gun to show the number of murders committed, is at last shot in his own store by his son to whom he had denied some request! Wild justice—not the majesty of the law—rules in these regions. It is to be regretted that, even in parts of the United States where the "poor-white question" does not come in, the education which makes men patriots seems too often to fail to imbue them with a sense of the duties, as well as the rights, of citizenship. Lawlessness in her people is one of the great problems of the United States to-day, a fact, no doubt, largely due to the admixture of races to whom the idea of law is not yet a tradition. I was immensely struck, on my first sojourn, by this disrespect for law, for although I had been in countries where civilisation was primitive I had nowhere encountered the deliberate contempt for the law and its processes which characterised many of my own friends and acquaintances. Many things which they disapproved they suffered rather than set the machinery of law in motion, regardless of the fact that, however uncertain that machinery might be, it must deteriorate with disuse, and that the way to improve it was not to ignore it. Everyone knows the stories of editors "out West," whose offices had to be barricaded against onslaughts of offended readers. Perhaps it may be news to some people that at the end of the nineteenth century a Southern editor, whose public contained some of the *fine fleur* of American civilisation, might have a no less exciting existence.

I knew one who went to his work warily every day. The office was situated in a square, and to reach it he had to pass down a street and cross the road. The crossing was the dangerous point. Down the street he had his shoulder to the wall and his "iron" handy. Then he took a good look to see if the coast was clear, and made a dart to the office door. Colonel X., with two big sons,

was on the look-out for him to avenge some insult in the paper, but for some days the editor evaded him. An Englishman, a friend of mine, who was on his staff, was writing busily one evening when the office boy rushed in with the news that the editor was being murdered in the square. He seized his "gun," threw himself downstairs and was just in time. The editor had his back to the wall and the colonel and his "boys" were taking shots at him. When my friend arrived on the scene and took steady aim they thought better of it and disappeared. The reason why more people are not killed in such an affray is that the six-shooter is not a weapon of precision in the hands of an angry man. The principal danger is to lookers-on, and they usually have the sense to get out of the way. My friend's "gun" was not loaded, as a matter of fact, but it was an effective weapon for all that, and saved the editor's life. There was no prosecution on account of this as it was known the jury would not convict. Instances of a flagrant kind have failed to secure conviction from a prejudiced jury, and this, to a great extent, is the root of the mischief. A horrible case, illustrating a genuine problem in America—that of juvenile crime—came also within my own knowledge. Two boys had a row and one knocked off the cap of the other, whereupon the insulted one went home, took his father's gun, and lay in wait for his enemy, finally taking deliberate aim through a window and shooting him dead.

It is, perhaps, a little unfair to include these stories in so brief an account of the Southern States as I saw them, but naturally the incidents were of a character to impress themselves on one's mind. Let me tell one of a less serious character. A briefless young barrister in a Western town was ordered by the Court to take the defence of a prisoner—a thief caught red-handed in the act. "What can I do for him, Judge?" he queried. "You done caught him in the act." "Do the best you can for him, Bob," was the answer. The young advocate

asked and obtained permission to confer with his client, while another case was called, and as no convenient place was to be found in the court-house they adjourned to the tavern across the way. Presently a constable came over to fetch them and found the lawyer alone. He shambled over to the Court and was confronted by the Judge. "Where's the prisoner?" "Wal, I guess he's acrost the the border into Wyoming by now. You done told me to do the best I could for him, and seeing the tight place he was in I give him the Jedge's horse and he lit out!" All the best Americans agree that the enforcement of the law and the incorruptible administration of justice are questions of the first importance at the present stage of their national life, and I am glad to see the prominence given to this by Mr. Taft, who will, I hope, be President by the time this book appears. A country which has such statesmen as Roosevelt and Taft can have no serious difficulty in securing vital reforms.

This mention of American statesmen may be my excuse for introducing some of those I have known. In London I met Mr. Bayard, the United States Minister, who was worthy of his name. At the Embassy, later on, I also met Mr. John Hay, with whom I became somewhat intimately acquainted, as our tastes were similar. I have a number of kind letters from him about my books. In manner and appearance he was cosmopolitan, a slender, dapper, dark-bearded man, with a quiet voice. His literary ability was quite above the average, though the quiet distinction of his prose style did not attract the sensational notice which constitutes fame nowadays. He had a real taste for poetry which has descended to one of his daughters. His career was really extraordinary. He began as a lawyer, fought in the Civil War, and became assistant adjutant-general and brevet-colonel. For five years he was editorial writer on the *New York Tribune* and acted for the editor, Mr. Whitelaw Reid (who succeeded Horace Greeley in 1872), when the latter was away. He was

secretary and intimate friend of Lincoln, then went into diplomacy, and was at the Paris and Vienna Legations, after which he became first Assistant Secretary of State. In 1897-98 he was Ambassador to England, and from that time was Secretary of State to the United States. This is the most important post after that of the President. He held it till his death. The last time I saw him was at Washington in 1903, and I remember his reminding me that he had served under three Presidents who had been assassinated—Lincoln, Garfield, and M'Kinley—"Rather unnerving, if I were a nervous man," he said quietly. In a less serious mood, he told my wife of a domestic disaster which once befell him and which will earn the sympathy of all bookish men. Leaving his library one summer vacation, he gave direction to the housemaid to be most careful in her dusting of the books. When he returned, she pointed out to him with pride that she had followed his orders—she had taken them all out and re-arranged them, *according to the colour of their bindings!*

With Mr. Roosevelt I did not become acquainted until my visit to Washington in 1903, although I was known to him through my books. After I had published my "Greater America" he wrote me a most characteristic letter. Having found in the first few pages some statement he wished to discuss, he did not wait to finish the book but dashed off a letter at once. He very kindly wrote again later and said he was delighted with "Greater America," "though you have not got the thing *quite* right about education in the Philippines. I wish, if you get to this side again, you would see Secretary Taft." He also said: "I shall go over some of your views on the Philippines with Secretary Taft."

My wife has two stories of the White House which shall be included here. The first relates to a concert given by the President and Mrs. Roosevelt in the pretty, newly-decorated ball-room. Little gilt chairs were placed for the guests, and these were well filled, except one row

in front reserved for performers. The President came in a little late, and glancing round took one of these chairs. An attendant bustled up to him and whispered something, when he immediately jumped up and apologetically transferred himself to a back seat. The Senator who was next my wife said to her, "You see how truly democratic we are. We don't even allow our President to think he can sit where he likes at his own party!" The other story concerns a curious coincidence. At a reception at the White House a lady in black came up to my wife and asked her, "Did I hear your name announced just now as Mrs. So-and-so?" "No," replied my wife, "I am Mrs. Archibald Colquhoun." "And I," said the lady, "am Mrs. Archibald Forbes." The coincidence was the more strange because the two husbands had both been special correspondents and had known each other well. Mrs. Archibald Forbes was a widow by this time, and (another coincidence) she was a daughter of Major-General M. C. Meiggs, U.S.A. Army, and therefore belonged to the family of the celebrated engineer whose grandchildren are friends of ours. In the chat which followed Mrs. Forbes told my wife an amusing experience of hers when she went to Scotland as a bride. Americans were not so well known in Scottish society at that time and she was regarded as a new specimen. Her more unsophisticated relations half expected her to have a red skin and wear feathers on her head! At a dinner-party given in her honour she overheard them congratulating themselves that she apparently was *quite* civilised and had perfect table manners!

I have had unusual opportunities for studying Mr. Taft, having spent some six weeks in the Philippines with him, and though this belongs, of course, to a period subsequent to the point fixed upon as a stopping-place in this book, the special interest attaching to this big American at this time may excuse my saying a few words about him here. The circumstances of our meeting belong to "another story." "Bill" Taft, as I see the journalists are beginning

to call him—in his family circle I never heard the name used, but then no one but a journalist ever called Mr. Roosevelt “Teddy”—first loomed upon us in the sweltering heat of a tropical noon as the biggest, reddest, hottest and best-tempered man we had ever seen. This impression was never effaced. I hope to have an opportunity of seeing him with the background of the White House, which under the Roosevelt *régime* has become a decent though by no means imposing residence for the First Magistrate of so great a country as the United States. But I shall always remember Mr. Taft with a background of sapphire sky and sea—blindingly bright—sitting in a cane chair with a folding table in front of him, a secretary on one side and Judge Luke Wright on the other. All are in white, and everyone’s collar has wilted. Perspiration streams down the pale cheek of the secretary and the red cheek of Mr. Taft, as he alternately mops and fans himself and dictates letters. At intervals the Judge calls him in to discuss some knotty point in the legal code they are drawing up, but as if these two occupations are not enough at one time, Mr. Taft pauses every now and then to shoot a joke over his shoulder at a group of ladies lying flat in long chairs a few yards off. “Now then! Now then! Mrs. Calhoun, I can’t have any treason to the United States talked aboard this boat—Oh, yes, I heard you all right!” On this particular boat it may be mentioned here, there were some of the heaviest men I have known—I was a lightweight at fourteen stone! The Filipinos were much impressed by our size. “Are all Americans like that?” they asked with awe.

The exertions of which Mr. Taft is capable in his voracity for work were the more remarkable in the climate of the Philippines, which saps the energy of most people, especially when one considers his size, which must have made the heat more oppressive. He will not have much time for idleness in the White House. One evening I remember when Mr. Roosevelt came in to his private room

at nearly 11 p.m. to have the chat for which I was waiting by appointment, he threw himself down in a chair and said the President was the hardest-worked man in America! "*He works hard too,*" he said, nodding laughingly at a picture of the Emperor William. "But, Lord! nothing like me!" Another quality for which Mr. Taft will find abundant use is the sweetness of his temper and genial tact. I have seen him worried by the little details of organisation which ought to have been spared him, but which the democratic system demanded that he should personally attend to, and his good-humour and patience were invariable. A more attractive personality it would be hard to find. There is something clean and straight and genuine about him, and he is as devoid of vanity or smallness of any kind as he is incapable of deceit. Withal he is genuinely American, with the buoyancy and idealism of the best type of his race, mixed with the practical commonsense and love of work which mark a more common and perhaps less attractive type. The combination is one of which any country might be proud. This is a personal book, so I will leave politics alone, otherwise I should be tempted into some forecasts as to Mr. Taft's development as a statesman.

It has been mentioned that I put my savings into American real estate. It was just at the end of my first visit to the States that I accomplished this stroke of genius. I was told a boom was coming in the South, and I hastened to rake my shekels together and invest them in a fruit plantation. The other day I heard a Canadian retrieve himself very neatly after a *faux pas*. He had been talking very amiably to a lady at a public dinner whose name he had not caught when they were introduced. Presently a speech was made referring to a lady journalist who was their guest that night. "Who is this woman?" he inquired of his neighbour. "Why, you're talking to her!" was the reply. For a moment he was out of countenance, then he said: "I reckon a man must make

a fool of himself at least once in his life—and my time has come!” Well, “my time” had certainly come! Hardly had I completed the investment of all my savings when down went the market. I heard the news when just sailing for home, and immediately on my arrival, being determined not to repeat my experience with “Charteredds,” and be squeezed out just before the property went up in value again, I raked some more money together somehow, borrowed on an insurance and sent out another thousand or so to be dropped into the bottomless pit! The crisis was one of the most severe ever experienced in the United States, and the depression lasted long enough to make it impossible to keep my plantation going.

Luckily for me I was able, at this juncture, to retire, drawing a special pension from the Government of India, so that my living was at least secure, but I had crippled myself severely by my foolish investment, and found it necessary, for the first time, to take inexpensive rooms, using my club as an address. I descended from Bryanston Street or St. James’ to Camden Town! Throughout life I have proved that what seems like a misfortune frequently turns out a blessing. In this case I found in the landlady of my rooms one of the best and most devoted of women, and from this time to the date of my marriage my home in England was always made under her roof, though I was not so comfortable in her second and more pretentious establishment as in my old “digs.” She looked after me with care and even, I think, affection, and I recall her memory with gratitude.

A small lecturing tour was now undertaken by me, always a most exhausting business, but lucrative if well managed. When one thinks of the number of good men killed by the fatigues of lecturing, especially in America, one is glad to have escaped. To give a few instances in my own memory—Charles Dickens, Max O’Rell, Ian Maclaren—all fell victims to the overstrain and fatigue of lecture work. It is



not so much the actual lecturing as the travelling between and the well-meant but fatal kindness included under the term "hospitality." Mark Twain was once asked what his charges would be to deliver a lecture "out West." He wired, "Lecture \$200, if with hospitality \$400." Colonel Pond, the great American lecture agent, with whom I was once in communication, told me that English lecturers as a rule did not make much of a success in the United States, but that Max O'Rell was the biggest "draw" that he had ever handled. I knew this clever and amusing man, and from his lips got the story of a *tu quoque* which is hard to beat. He was touring in Australia at the same time as an actor-manager with a Shakespearcan repertory, and at a dinner to which both were invited, the latter called across the table to him, "D'ye know, M. Blouët, I went to see your show the other night and I never laughed once!" "How curious," replied "Max" swiftly, "I went to see your 'Hamlet' last night and laughed the whole time!" Mme. Blouët has told me that the enthusiasm of the American ladies after her husband's lectures was beyond all bounds. One of them rushed up to her and said: "Madame Blouay, your husband is just the loveliest thing that ever happened!" Personally I thought Blouët inimitable—the very best lecturer of his *genre* I ever heard. His premature death was most regrettable.

My own experience of a lecture tour ended disastrously. After visiting several of the large manufacturing cities, where addresses were delivered to geographical or other societies, I was due at Edinburgh to be present at a party given by a married sister there. The preceding night, after my lecture, I spent at an hotel in Manchester, and woke up feeling cold and miserable, but caught the train and arrived at my sister's house. I felt feverish and had some difficulty in keeping up during the evening, but next morning the doctor, who was sent for, declared it was nothing much. I had an overpowering desire to get back

to my own place—the sick animal's instinct to crawl to his hole—and I took the express to London, arrived at my rooms in a state of collapse, and tumbled into bed. I never left that bed for five months, going through a most severe attack of rheumatic fever. My kind landlady did all in her power for me, and my half-brother and an old friend, Archie Constable, also came to me, but for a great part of the time I was unconscious or delirious. It has been mentioned that I was practically saved by an old doctor friend from Rangoon, who came and brought a great specialist on rheumatic fever. The latter prescribed drastic but effective treatment. He afterwards told me he had seldom seen a more severe case.

When fairly convalescent I went through one of the most awful experiences of my life, which in the interests of other sick men is related here. I was so weak that I could not lift a finger, and had to be moved and fed like a baby. The nurse who had charge at this stage was a fiend in human shape. The slightest noise jarred my nerves and broke my sleep, and that woman habitually read the newspaper at night—and crackled it viciously! To this day the sound of a newspaper rustling produces in me a strong sense of physical discomfort. I had always been unaware of possessing nerves, and was able to abstract myself at any moment from noise around me, but this faculty I lost from the time of this illness. The nurse-fiend was very sweet to me when my landlady or the doctor was by, but when she got me alone she slapped me if I gave trouble, or took my arm, lying like a log on the coverlet, and threw it across the bed! I used to cry in my helplessness, and was too frightened to say a word. Her petty persecutions, nothing to a patient with some little control of his actions, were excruciating agony to me. At last I got a little stronger and screwed up my courage, and seizing my landlady during an absence of the nurse from the room I made her swear not to leave me if I told her something. I then revealed the nurse's iniquities, including

her habit of sleeping and snoring when she was supposed to be watching me at night. My evident fear impressed Mrs. E. with the truth of my story, and she forbade the woman to enter the room, and finally when the doctor arrived secured her instant dismissal. How I listened for her angry voice and her footstep on the stair! Presently I heard stump, stump, stump, and the front door crashed with a bang that shook the house and jarred every nerve in my body—but I was happy! Her successor, a quiet and gentle woman, seemed to me an angel of kindness and beauty!

When I was well enough to be moved, the Louttits took me to their home, and the old servant who saw me being brought in did not recognise me, and asked her mistress, "Who is the poor old gentleman Mr. Duncan is bringing in?" I shall never forget the horrible sensation of leaving my bed after five months. The insecurity of everything—despite the support of two stalwart friends—seemed to offer no prospect save that of sinking through space. The first time I was allowed to dress myself I nearly got scalded, for, being very daring, I got into a hot bath and turned on the tap. Presently, when it got unpleasantly hot, I found I could neither turn it off nor get out! Luckily I had not bolted the door, and Duncan came to the rescue just in time.

This was the first and only real illness, except fever, I ever had. Since then I have never had more than a few days in bed with heavy colds. It speaks volumes for my constitution that six months after my complete recovery I was able to insure myself as a first-class life and have felt no evil effects from heart or other trouble. I can eat anything, sleep anywhere, ride for hours, and walk many young friends of my acquaintance off their legs.

As soon as I was strong again I had to face a great tangle in my affairs, brought about by more than a year's inactivity and heavy expenses on the top of all my losses in America. How I set about getting work again I will show in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XV

### IN CENTRAL AMERICA

"THE ruling passion" with me—the subject of communications—had drawn my attention while in the United States to the Canal question, and I had discussed it at Washington and elsewhere with many people who were well up in the subject. This fact brought me, indirectly, into touch with a group of men in London who desired more information about it, as they contemplated participating in the construction. Of course, at this time it was thought that the Canal would be made by a private company but would certainly be owned internationally. Partly with a view to "prospecting" for these people and partly on my own account I determined to visit Central America and go into the Canal question as thoroughly as I could on the spot. I therefore took a passage by the Royal Mail Steamship Line for Colon and arrived there after a very pleasant voyage, during which I touched at several of the West Indian islands and made my first acquaintance with those jewels of the Caribbean.

Colon, the Atlantic terminus of the Panama Canal, was very different in those days to what it is now. The dreaded mosquito had not yet been grappled with; indeed, we were not aware of his deadly character, and bore his stings with as much equanimity as we could muster. Fever was rampant, and the West Indian negroes who had been imported for the Canal work were no more exempt than the whites. When I arrived, about five hundred men were being kept at work in order that the French concession under the new company might not lapse, and the machinery and plant were maintained in

fairly good order. I travelled over the route and studied numbers of estimates, reports and monographs on the subject, with the result that I was by no means convinced of the feasibility of the Canal under the conditions then existing. The estimate made by me for completing the work was not less than forty millions sterling, a sum which seemed too large to allow of the Canal being built under private auspices. The scheme which is now being carried out was originally estimated at twenty-eight millions but has already been altered so as to considerably increase the amount. Judging from the present rate of expenditure, and allowing for contingencies not adequately provided for, I do not think the ultimate cost of the Canal will fall short of the sum originally laid down by me. I was then, moreover, of the opinion that the factor of the greatest uncertainty was the Chagres river, ordinarily a quiet stream but liable to be swelled suddenly into a torrential flood. Having seen something of tropical rivers in connection with engineering problems in other countries I was anxious to form my own estimate of the Chagres, and the result was a conviction that that river presents difficulties for which we have no adequate experience to guide us in circumventing it. This judgment remains true to this day. Constant alterations have been made in the Canal scheme as adopted by the United States Government with a view to strengthening the works by which the Chagres is to be controlled, but these works must be of an experimental character, and the success of the Canal depends on the Chagres behaving as it is expected to after the works are finished. The largest possible margin will of course be allowed for accident.

My intention had been to return from my inspection to Colon and take a steamer thence up the coast to Greytown, but finding no steamer available I decided to present a letter of introduction, given me by Major (later General) Ludlow, Military Attaché to the United States Embassy in London, to Robley Evans, then with a portion of the White

Squadron which was off Colon. "Fighting Bob" Evans received me very kindly and was quite willing to give me a passage up the coast as the squadron was just starting, but the admiral, a confirmed Anglophobe, when the request was preferred to him, swore he would have "no d——d *Times* correspondent on *his* ships." It must be explained that the affair of the Mosquito Coast (see p. 331) was then on the *tapis*, and that the English were not popular in Central America. Rather than wait a couple of weeks in Colon I crossed the isthmus to Panama and took a passage from there up the Pacific coast to the Nicaraguan port Corinto, but this disarrangement in my plans was a serious inconvenience to me and an extra expense for which provision had not been made. I was determined not to miss any part of my programme, however, so took a passage at the lowest rate on the Pacific boat—it practically amounted to a deck passage. I had not the ready cash for anything more, unless I crippled myself unduly before arriving in Nicaragua, where I was most anxious to move about freely and stay some time. The agent of the boat offered to give me a cabin on trust, saying the money could be sent later, and on my refusal, being determined to economise, he actually gave me a cabin to myself and said I could arrange my own messing. I provided myself with some stores and was quite prepared to "see it out," but even here the kindness of strangers pursued me, for an American gentleman travelling first class begged me to join their meals as his guest, offered me the passage-money as a loan, and when both kind offers were refused, was quite put out. The little discomfort was, of course, nothing to an old campaigner like myself, and I much preferred the saving it enabled me to effect, but I was certainly inconvenienced by the fact that one cannot step out of the usual rut without attracting attention. At a trifling cost I messed with the engineers, whose society was perfectly congenial and from whom a lot of information was picked up.

Corinto was by no means a vast city, containing only

some one thousand souls. When one has seen one of these small Spanish-American ports one knows a number of them. Low marshy foreshore—one lands as a rule from a small boat—a decayed-looking wharf, a “street” flanked by wooden buildings with corrugated iron roofs, a dusty *plaza*, a church with some architectural pretensions, *reja* guarded windows, and open doors revealing slatternly women in “rockers”—there are variations on the picture, but these are the main features. I went up by rail to Leon, the largest town, and on to Managua (the capital) and Granada, whose Spanish namesake I was yet to see. Here one is right on the Spanish main and few cities have not a story of sack and rapine by the buccaneers. Granada and Leon were founded by Hernandez de Cordova, and the former was sacked by L'Ollonais in 1685 and burnt to the ground by the filibuster Walker in 1852, while Leon was sacked and partly burnt in 1685 by English freebooters, including Dampier. Other “cities” visited by me were Rivas and Masaya, the latter once the seat of the Indian chief Nicarao, whose name the Spaniards gave to the whole country. Here the native dresses and customs were to be seen and at this time afforded a picturesque study.

Since this journey I have visited many other Spanish-American countries and towns, and the likeness of one to another and of all to their European prototypes is quite remarkable. The Spaniards have set an unmistakable seal upon lands they conquered while the British have not Britishised any tropical country below the surface. They adopt a style of architecture and a mode of life modelled on that of the natives, but Spain built solidly, great stone cathedrals, thick walled houses with *patios*, massive fortifications, wide *plazas* with ornate fountains, stately *presidios*, strong and loathsome prisons. No bamboo huts and bungalows for them! Moreover, they imposed their religion and civilisation wherever they went. The cities of Spanish America have consequently none of the

temporary makeshift appearance one finds in other settlements of Europeans on alien soil. The Spanish temperament, with its love of art and poetry, has stood the shock of race admixture. The Spanish-American has the faults of his European forbear with others added, but he has what painters call "quality"—there is originality in him, stuffing in him. He may do great things yet, because with all his faults he has ideals and the great tradition of his Latin blood is not forgotten. But, while this is true of the Latin-American peoples as a whole, and especially of such as the Chilians or Brazilians, it must be confessed that the worst specimens of the breed are to be found in the Panama isthmus.

My view of social life in Nicaragua afforded me much amusement, especially at first—before the everlasting *mañana* began to get on my nerves. My first view of the people was on the railway journey, and nowhere outside Russia have I seen such a domestic scene as our departure! Families and their household goods, pets of all sorts, utensils and articles of furniture (including one not usually paraded in society) were shoved into the train. Every now and then the chattering rose into a shriek as some bare-shouldered, bare-footed, brown-limbed girl came running down the road and on to the platform waving a forgotten article, which she thrust through the window with much laughing. Even in the first class the carriage was littered with impedimenta, and smoking, theoretically provided for in separate cars, was indulged in everywhere and by both sexes. The ladies, often very pretty when young, were attired in fashionable frocks of muslin or silk, but wore a *reboso* (a variant of the Spanish *mantilla*) over their heads, or else were bareheaded. Hats were reserved for great occasions like Easter Sunday. The men seemed chiefly remarkable for the length of their patent leather boots, which came to a point several inches beyond the place conceivably reached by the end of their toes. The method of greeting is quaint at first sight—no handshake,



but an arm passed round each other's shoulders and a gentle patting on the back. Newsboys, very small and dirty, swarmed on to the cars selling Spanish translations of French novels—Maupassant, Ohnet, de Montépin—or local papers—*El Diarito*, *El 93*, and so forth—while sellers of *confiteos* and *dulces* (cakes and sweets of all sorts) were equally busy. On the journey to Managua we took a steamer on the lake part of the way, and here accommodation was even more primitive and the food supplied uneatable. Hotels in Central America, with few exceptions, are to the present day remarkable for a family likeness to those one finds off the beaten track in Spain—in short, they are as bad as can be. There was no special reason for anyone to travel in Nicaragua, so my experience was that of accommodation which was not designed to suit foreigners. In one respect it was worse than I had had in the heart of China. There, at all events, hot water to wash with was a matter of course, but in a Nicaraguan hotel it seemed quite outside reasonable expectation. On asking for a bath after the dusty journey, one was kindly warned that, especially after coming up from the *tierras calientes*, it would be highly dangerous to wash, and that it was usual to keep on a mask of dust and dirt for a day or two before opening the pores to the cooler air! Not being prepared to take this advice I was conducted through a dirty kitchen and a still dirtier backyard, to a grimy-looking hut labelled *El Baño*. Inside I found a greasy bench, a still greasier grating on which to stand, a small brick reservoir containing rather green water, and a half-coconut shell wherewith to ladle it over myself. This is a common type of bath at the best hotels, but once I was told there was one with “water laid on.” In great expectation I opened the door—it was a wooden annexe to the hotel on the second floor—and found a bare room with a floor made of planks placed some little distance apart. The tap was there, at the end of a slender lead pipe, and when turned the water trickled solemnly out and ran

through the floor ; but the only way to get thoroughly wet was to crouch underneath the tap close to the wall, and then almost as soon as one got wet one got dry with the heat of the sun on the thin laths of wood ! Thirty cents (fourpence) was paid for the doubtful luxury of my first bath in Nicaragua.

The cooking was on a par with the sanitary arrangements ; sloppy soups, greasy stews, leather-like steaks flanked with half a roasted plantain and some watery rice—every traveller knows the *menu* well. Some native products are not bad, the *tortilla* for instance, made of maize flour, and the *frijoles*, cakes of beans. The chocolate and coffee, grown in the country and excellent in themselves, are spoilt in preparation, and tea was bought in a drug-store in my time and was used only as a medicine—it could never have been drunk for pleasure !

A word with regard to the sleeping accommodation of Nicaraguan hotels. Misfortune notoriously makes man acquainted with strange bedfellows, and it may safely be said that the Nicaraguan hotel-keeper does his best to aid misfortune, for to crowd as many beds and bedfellows as possible into one room seems the height of his ambition. On one occasion I myself had the questionable honour of passing the night in a not too large dormitory with six others, a rather mixed company ; while a friend of mine related to me an instance of having had to share a small bed with a large parish priest, the two remaining couches that the room contained being respectively tenanted by a notorious gambler and two *demi-mondaines*. As a rule there may not be more fleas in a Nicaraguan hotel bed than are at times to be found in those of other tropical countries, but occasionally their numbers and voracity are exceedingly trying to the weary traveller, whose only resource is to resign himself to the inevitable, and think of that expressive Spanish-American saying, *Paciencia, pulgas, que la noche es larga !* ("Patience, fleas, for the night is long !")

Nicaraguan clubs cannot be held to possess any great attraction for local masculine society. The average club consists as a rule of a couple of long rooms, tenanted by two or three card-tables, rows of rocking-chairs, a bar, an indifferent piano, and a worse billiard-table. Frequently a flat roof, used in the cool of the evening as a smoking lounge, completes the establishment. Club life I found the veritable embodiment of the sameness and *insouciance* so characteristic of the native life.

Street life has always fascinated me, and in Central America it was no exception. Enter the narrow street, gaze around on massive wall and tiled roof, lofty portal and grating of rusty iron, with the hush of old-time stillness over all. Pass out along the narrow pathway of sun-scorched pavement, by the open-doored shops and stores—denoted always by some specific name, high-sounding and pretentious, such as “The Pearl,” “Precious Things,” “The Emerald,” “Elegance”—and take a glimpse at the interior of the private houses with their paneless, iron-barred windows, so suggestive of either the convent or the jail. Stout wooden shutters inside, generally closed from nine o’clock in the morning until the afternoon, keep out the heat and dust, the latter for two-thirds of the year being a source of great annoyance. Through the open windows the same picture of family life presents itself as it has done for ages past, as it will do for generations to come. A bare room with little attempt at adornment and less sign of comfort; two rows of rocking-chairs fronting one another tenanted by the listless inmates, the male sex ranged on one side, the ladies on the other, this rule of the division of the sexes being strictly observed. The sole exception, somewhat rarely made, is in the case of the accepted suitor who has the privilege of occupying a chair at the side of his sweetheart.

The idleness of the ladies, who in my time were sadly uneducated and ill-informed, was something stupendous,

the only work patronised being some piece of trivial embroidery—a marked contrast, be it noted, to their Indian sisters, who are hard-working and correspondingly strong. There has been improvement in this respect—female education—but not much, save in towns where American or European influence predominates. From hour to hour they sit and rock—the “rock of ages” I heard it called—a marvellous phase of sociability, strictly Spanish-American. A curious home-life, indeed, that seems to have but one object, and that the killing of time, which soul-stirring occupation is pursued with a minimum of domestic effort. Family diversions are very limited, consisting of a little piano-playing, a great deal of church-going, an occasional *tertulia* (evening party) or dance, and last, but no means least, the bi-weekly *paseo* in the *plaza*, where they participate in what appears to the uninitiated a very *banal* business, the evening parade of local society including the upper ten—the *alta sociedad*. Sometimes they go to the theatre—the families in the boxes, the young men in the stalls—always the division of the sexes as far as possible, carrying out rigidly the wonderful Spanish-American maxim that if two of the opposite sex be left together harm is sure to follow.

The ways of love-making amused me much. Strictly speaking, in accordance with the unwritten laws of Spanish Central America, the lover is absolutely forbidden to enter the house of his *inamorata*. Even when, prior to his amatory inclination becoming evident, he happens to be an intimate of the family, all friendship ceases the moment it is known that he is *haciendo el oso* (“playing the bear”) as they say, to one of the young ladies. Seeing that the unfortunate Romeo has to carry on his courtship in the most stealthy manner possible, the only opportunity of speaking with his lady-love being through the *reja* of the window, where he is to be found night after night haunting the iron railings with a pertinacity that would do credit to a Yankee drummer, the phrase seems somewhat

of a misnomer. He certainly never gets a chance of hugging. The enmity provoked in the bosoms of the young lady's family is really remarkable. He is cut by all of them, and must ever be on guard against the sudden appearance of his probable future relations on the scene of his amorous dalliance. Such, then, are the pains and penalties of daring to fall in love, and under the circumstances the lover ought to be a very unhappy man, but I do not know that he is. Questioned on the subject, he will tell you that their methods of courtship, with the thrilling excitement to be found in stolen interviews, accomplished only by unceasing intrigue, are infinitely preferable to the tame Anglo-American custom, and that he fails to see any attraction in being allowed to accompany one's sweetheart when she takes her walks abroad or in being constantly in her company. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule of courtship among the more advanced section of society, when the lover is allowed not only to enter the house but to take his seat at the side of the young lady; everything he has to say, however, must be spoken in presence of members of the family, or at any rate of the *duenna* who never for a moment leaves him alone and under no circumstances allows herself to be caught napping. Notwithstanding all this excessive vigilance, the standard of morality is by no means high, as indeed might be expected from the training given to men and women (but especially the convent education of the latter) and from the indolent life invariably led.

No lady receives a gentleman's visit alone, unless it be that of one of the priests, who, by the way, are generally reported not to neglect their opportunities. The privileges and power of the priesthood are, however, fast on the decline, and the more intelligent section of society is gradually emancipating itself from the worst features of their religious subservience. Unfortunately they seem in this process to part with their religious beliefs. The men of the upper classes are never seen at service and seldom

enter a church, except on the occasion of a funeral or some ceremony, but the women of all classes attend morning mass without fail and are very religious, in outward form at least.

The street scenes are exceedingly picturesque, everybody wearing light attire of cotton, muslin, and flannel, the women being conspicuous by their bright-coloured dresses. Those of the poorer classes wear neither shoes nor sandals, yet—or is it in consequence?—their feet are small and well-shaped. The Indian women are well-featured, some are very handsome, and all have beautiful teeth. The ordinary costume of the peasant woman consists of a skirt and chemise of white cotton, with a coloured scarf or a *reboso* thrown over head and shoulders. The sleeveless and to our ideas at first sight rather *décolletée* costume, worn without any trace of immodesty however, must be pronounced a rather slovenly though doubtless comfortable attire and one well suited to the climate.

The men do not affect sport. Shooting and boating are altogether unknown, though the lakes offer ample opportunity for the latter. In the afternoon the youths ride showy horses or mules *à la française* with a maximum of curvet and prance, and in the evenings they gamble at the club or elsewhere. Field sports are patronised only by the English, Germans or Americans.

With regard to public amusements, the people are devoted to the theatre, but naturally few passable theatrical companies come to Nicaragua, though now and again a fair Mexican travelling troupe is to be found there, playing light opera or heavy drama. Like all the peoples of the Latin race, the Nicaraguans are passionately fond of music, but most of all of light or comic opera. Even if comedy or drama be played, ballad and chorus must seemingly be introduced in some form or another. The “marimba,” an instrument well adapted to the plaintive but melodious native airs, is kept at all the *tambos* (resting stages) on the main highways where the cartmen and muleteers

stop. It is not unusual for an unfortunate troupe of actors to be stranded in one of the inland towns without the means to move. A friend of mine told me that on one occasion he and another man, who had witnessed the performance of such a troupe and had quite lost their hearts to the young and lovely leading lady, collected a handsome subscription which they proposed to lay personally on her shrine and thus get another glimpse of the goddess. Unfortunately for their illusion they chose the morning for their visit, and found the señorita with her stout mamma, eating pickled onions *en deshabillé*. Not all the languishing of her long brown eyes could prevent them from noticing the high-water mark on her neck, and, as my friend pathetically remarked, they felt they would pay twice the money to get her out of the town!

Now and again may be witnessed an inferior bull-fight—or perhaps one ought to say bull-baiting, seeing that they are not allowed to kill the animal—on which occasion everybody turns out; this pastime, or gambling, alone possessing the magic power of making the Nicaraguan lose a little of his wonted indifference. They played Audran's "Mascotte" one night I visited the Granada theatre, during the performance of which a topical song, brought very much up to date and rounded off with a crushing verse about the British nation with reference to the Corinto incident, was introduced with startling success. It may be remembered that the occupation of Corinto by the British Government for the violent treatment of her consular representative, for which a fine of £5,500 was exacted as "smart money," created great excitement in Nicaragua. Luckily the *impresario* was good enough to omit several verses which would certainly have exercised an unfortunate effect upon the already over-excited people, especially the youth of the city, who had been for days parading the streets, shouting *Que mueran los Ingleses*.

The local journals went delirious, and the Press of the United States was inundated by telegraph with exaggerated

and inflammatory views. I was invited by a Nicaraguan paper to retrace my steps: to "return at once by the way I had come." The Monroe doctrine was in everyone's mouth. Nicaragua's hopes were without doubt centred in the expected interference of the United States Government, largely influenced by what was appearing in the American Press, especially certain distorted interpretations of the Monroe doctrine which encouraged the view that territorial aggrandisement and the control of the inter-oceanic route were the real aims of the British.

The United States Government, and the larger section of the whole people too, I believe, took altogether a soberer view of the matter, and fully recognised that Britain had done nothing in Nicaragua which the United States themselves would not have done under similar circumstances. The incident cleared the air, and was useful as a practical exposition of the Monroe doctrine and of the obligations of the United States towards the various republics of Central America, as well as towards the West Indies and South America. It was made evident that the position of the United States is not that of an involuntary Power whose armed force is to be at the beck and call of any American State that may find itself in need of aid.

In the theatre, the railway, or steamer—indeed, everywhere—courtesy, it must be mentioned, is a marked trait. On the road the peasant invariably greets you with "God be with you," or some such fair words, as in most other countries except our own, meaning little or nothing, perhaps, but still pleasant in its way. The markets were very interesting, with their crowds of Indian stall-holders busily engaged in disposing of their wares, but it cannot be said that the supply and variety of fruits and vegetables come up to one's expectation. In Managua the market building, which covers an entire square, was built by an English company holding a Government monopoly for twenty-five years; and in Granada the market was erected by the city



council with money raised by a loan, the management being in the hands of the capitalists who subscribed, an Englishman being the leading spirit.

Railroads, waggon roads, especially tramways, and more facilities for transportation generally, were urgently needed. The so-called "waggon roads," along which the *carreta* creaks its weary mile per hour, were terrible. Only those who have experienced it can realise the suffering and danger of mule-back travelling across the mountains, especially during the rainy season, when the rivers are swollen and the mountain paths one long unbroken quagmire through which the unfortunate pack-mules struggle and sink in their arduous task of carrying freight to and from Matagalpa (the rising coffee-raising region to the north of Lake Managua) or the districts on the Costa Rican frontier. Wages generally are low, ordinary labourers, cartmen, and farm hands earning from forty to eighty cents a day (six to eight pence) the coffee pickers being paid by the task—about ten cents for forty pounds of green berries. But notwithstanding this poor remuneration food and clothing are so cheap, wants are so few, and Nature is so bountiful that everybody seems to wear a more contented air than is usual in Europe or the States. Beggars are not unknown but, strictly speaking, begging is prohibited except on Saturday, which is regarded as "Beggar's Day." Now and again may be seen an old man or woman riding a broken-down nag, soliciting alms, but this seems rather the exception than the rule, notwithstanding the prevalent idea that all beggars are mounted in Spanish America. The children are charming, and the babies phenomenally plump, in charge of bright little Indian attendants.

It is not possible to spend even a short time in a Central American republic without seeing something of the peculiar political conditions resulting on the adoption, by a people ill adapted to work it, of an outward form of republicanism. Every well-governed Spanish-American republic — and

there are more than one—owes its prosperity to having found a dictator. Nicaragua has not been so fortunate, and is still a prey to the political unrest that I noted at the time of my first visit. This is what I wrote at the time:

“Elections are very differently managed to those of Europe or the States. As a rule they take place without the people's knowledge, the result generally showing the return of the President's selection at the head of the poll. The process is as follows: a few weeks before the date of the so-called elections an address is circulated in which it is courteously but plainly pointed out that, while in no way wishing to bring undue influence to bear upon the electors, in the opinion of the President and ministers Mr. X. and Mr. Y. would be highly suitable people for such and such seats, and returned they usually are. But if the people happen not to approve of the official nominees, ah!—then occurs the revolution, that oft-recurring feature, the *pièce de résistance* of Central American life.

“What happens is this: the different party leaders take up all the arms they can lay hands on, everybody turns soldier for the time being, and so they fight the question out. Wholesale recruiting of men of high and low rank instantly takes place, all the prominent partisans of the opposite way of thinking to the Government, if they have not succeeded in making good their escape, are immediately put in prison, while the Government forthwith seizes wholesale the railroads, steamers, carriages, horses, mules, saddles, and harness; shuts up the post office, suppresses all newspapers, denies the use of the telegraph to everybody except their own supporters, and even then no private messages are allowed to be sent. The system of recruiting on both sides is very curious. Bands of *comisionados* issue into the country and press into service all they can lay hands on. The young men of the middle and upper classes of course are given commissions, those only receiving the post they covet who help the Government with money. If a man gives a thousand dollars ‘war subscription,’ and is offered the post of lieutenant, he refuses to serve unless they make him a colonel, and colonel he probably becomes; and so the process continues, the result being that the number of officers is out of all proportion to the men under their command. The Government party relies principally on the more or less disciplined troops, but if the enemy make a successful *golpe de cuartel*—that is to say, if they succeed in seizing the barracks and disarming the *veteranos*—the troops, seemingly as a matter of course, continue the fight under the revolutionary colours. A ‘battle’ or so may be fought, and a little blood spilt on both sides, but the whole business is soon over; if the insurrectionary party get the advantage the Government instantly retires, and so matters are arranged.

"Sometimes, however, as a means of avoiding a threatened rising, they go so far as to make considerable show of opening the polling booths, and one little instance will give a pretty fair idea of what a mockery it all is. On the eve of the day announced for the polling, the *alcalde* of one of the larger towns despatches a batch of messengers to three hundred or so residents in the district, requiring their presence on the morrow under penalty of a heavy fine. On arriving next day they are ushered one by one into the *Cabildo* (Government building) where the *alcalde* wishes them good-morning and summons his clerk, who hands to each man a strip of paper neatly folded up, pointing at the same time to a box and adding: 'Put it in there, please.' Mr. Elector does as he is requested, after which another clerk registers his name and address, the *alcalde* comes forward and shakes him by the hand, and the next moment he is in the street—asking the first passer-by what it all means. Next morning the official gazette solemnly announces that by an overwhelming majority Mr. 'So-and-so' has been elected to the Vice-Presidency, and so the matter ends. And this is what is known as the strict observance of the people's right of voting."

On a subsequent occasion I remember, when re-visiting Central America, and pottering up the coast in a fruit steamer which collected bananas at all the small ports, at one place a cheerful American doctor welcomed us in a charming bungalow and talked about revolutions. One was expected at that moment. "Do they inconvenience you much?" we asked. "Wa-al, they do some," he said, reflectively. "Last time they chose to manœuvre across my tennis court, and as I'd had considerable trouble in getting it in order I did raise an objection that time!"

Revolutions are, however, by no means always bloodless. Colombia waged a civil war which so decimated her full-grown men that on one occasion when I visited that country the merest little boys were enrolled as soldiers. Political convictions, moreover, are serious matters; a man will die for them. I met a quiet, sad-eyed little man, one who had just come out of Cartagena jail after three years' captivity. The dungeons of Cartagena are something to be seen to be believed; prisoners have to be supplied with food by their friends, and many of them save an expense their families can ill afford by dying. My

little friend had suffered and survived. We asked him what it was all about. "A matter of politics," he replied; "I am anti-clerical, and the other party came in, so when they sent round a proclamation for me to sign and demanded a heavy contribution I refused. Then, of course, I must go to prison." "But why not *pretend*," asked an unscrupulous young lady who listened to the story—she had seen the dungeons, and she knew that the little man had lost most of his property by confiscation as well. "Oh, señorita," he replied, "for a man of honour that is impossible!"

My serious studies of the Canal occupied most of my time, and on my return home I embodied them in a book called "The Key of the Pacific," in which the advantages of the Nicaragua route were urged. It would have been much longer than the Panama, but I do not think the engineering difficulties are nearly as great. Among the advantages, the chief is the strategic one. On the waters of Lake Nicaragua—the largest body of fresh water between Lake Michigan in North America and Lake Titicaca in Peru—could float the combined navies of the whole world, and a glance at any general map will suffice to show why such vast importance has been attached to it in the past by men like David, Nelson, Humboldt, and Napoleon III. and by the leading American statesmen and naval authorities of the present day. Nelson realised the importance of the lake when, in helping to put into execution Dalling's plan in 1780 (to control the communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific), he conveyed a force of 2,000 men to San Juan de Nicaragua to effect the conquest of the country. "In order to give facility to the great object of government," he wrote, "I intend to possess the great lake of Nicaragua, which I regard as the inland Gibraltar of Spanish America."

It is impossible here to tell the story of the war waged over the rival routes, in which my "Key" was a weapon used more than once, quoted in the Senate, extracts embodied

in Government reports, and so forth. The forces which had opposed both canals, for reasons of self-interest, were finally worsted in the fight, but political conditions decided in favour of the route by Panama. The question was this: Could the United States with its expansionist policy, of which President Roosevelt became the protagonist, permit the Canal to be owned, even partly, by another nation? The question was answered in the negative and, the United States having shouldered the burden with the acquiescence of the other Powers, one great difficulty was eliminated. The question of expense was no longer of paramount importance, and an expenditure of thirty or more millions sterling could be faced without blinking. This at once removed an objection to Panama, and France was bought out. The second difficulty which had occurred to me—that of carrying out such vast works in a foreign territory—was overcome by Mr. Roosevelt in a fashion which could hardly have been anticipated in 1894. In short, all objections to Panama, including the malarial mosquito, have been successfully eliminated save one—the Chagres river. The Culebra cut, which seemed to the engineering science of 1894 an enormous obstacle, is now being rapidly disposed of, but the river itself still puzzles the experts, who find it hard to decide where and how it is to be successfully dammed and made to play the game. A factor which is undeterminable in either route is the possibility of seismic disturbance, and in view of this I have always been in favour of the fewest possible artificial works, and these as strong as engineering skill can make them. With the energy the United States are now putting into the work, the Canal—barring accidents—should be open in time for me to go through it.

On my way home I stopped at Trinidad and met there a former *Times* correspondent in the governor, Sir Napier Broome, and his wife, who as Lady Barker had been in New Zealand and South Africa and had written several interesting books and sketches of social life. I remember

her as an excellent talker and with considerable powers of repartee. On one occasion she was visiting an American country house, on the invitation of a New York lady of the type which just then was beginning to play at having a "country home" without much idea of the game. Lady Broome was dressed with great simplicity—probably she looked dowdy. She had expected an afternoon visit to a sort of farmhouse and a scramble about on the hills. She found a cottage *ornée* and all the ladies in full toilettes. Her hostess, in the course of a discussion as to their respective countries, said, "You don't mind my saying it, I hope, but English women don't know *how* to dress!" "Quite so," said Lady Broome sweetly, "but you will also allow, I am sure"—with a sly glance round the room,— "that American women don't know *when* to dress!" On another occasion she was talking with the admiral of a foreign squadron which put in at Trinidad. He was bellicose and had not much tact. "If we *did* have a brush with your ships," he began. "Well," said Lady Broome, "what then?" He laughed. "I should be towing that tub"—pointing to the English flagship—"into one of your ports!" "Indeed," said Lady Broome, "you compliment neither yourself nor us. I should have expected you to reply that both ships would be sunk or disabled!" It was very pretty, and the reproof, conveyed without any disparagement of his own prowess, struck me as especially neat.

Home again—and with plenty of fresh material for work. I was launched by "The Key of the Pacific" on the public of America as well as of my own country as an author, and from this time forward I have never been without either a commission or a scheme for a fresh book. My work for reviews on both sides of the Atlantic increased steadily, and about this time I formed a connection with the *Morning Post* which continues unbroken to this day. The *Times*, to which I had hitherto contributed, had now a very strong staff to deal with Eastern affairs, including Mr. Valentine Chirol and soon after my friend Dr. Morrison,

the best informed correspondent any paper ever had in the Far East. As the Far Eastern question was then becoming prominent I returned to it in the columns of the *Morning Post*, and since then I have never written for any other daily paper, except an occasional book review for the *Daily Chronicle* before it became half price.

At this point, my return from America and my definite embarkation upon the sea of literature and journalism, I must close—for the present, at all events—the record of work and travel in four continents. The work has been good to do and it is good to remember. Some of it I hope has been useful, none was purposeless. Such retrospects are not without a melancholy side, for one looks back on lost comrades and lost causes, but for my own part I find the present too absorbing to have time to regret the past. I have said very little in these pages about my politics, because for the best part of my life I was not able to identify myself with any party, and in our country politics without party are hardly intelligible. Having spent comparatively so short a time in England I have never followed the more localised questions which influence home politics. It has been, on the contrary, a bitter experience to find the interests of whole communities of British overseas subordinated to some affair of the parish pump. But the parish pump is of vital importance to the parish, and by degrees I have come to realise that it is not a fault in our people but in the system, and even so the system is the best that has yet been devised by man so long as it is not stereotyped. It must progress. I hope that it may progress in the direction of an Empire which will be something more than a heterogeneous collection of “colonies,” “dependencies,” and “independencies”—we want the last term—bound together but not united. In short, I am a convinced and rabid Imperialist, and my chief ambition is that the work I have been able to do, in helping to educate my countrymen as to little known

regions and in attempting to grapple with world problems, has been a contribution, however humble, towards the knowledge that is power and without which we cannot build our Empire strong and safe. With this end in view I have written always without fear or favour.

Before closing this book I will briefly recapitulate my principal doings since 1895. In the following year I went out to China on a mission from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, in company with Mr. Detring, who represented a powerful group of German banks. This business kept me in China for a year, and I had a house at Peking and got a considerable insight into things Chinese. My mission took me into the region of high politics, and on my return home I published "China in Transformation" and did a good deal of speaking in connection with affairs in the Far East. I might mention that I came home *viâ* Canada and spent some time there *en route*. In 1897 I was commissioned by Messrs. Harper and went out across Siberia by the railway to Irkutsk (then the terminus) and thence across the Gobi desert by camel to Peking. From Peking I made my way south, up the Yangtze, and out *viâ* Yunnan to Tongking. Returning *viâ* Australasia I wrote "The Overland to China," and a smaller book, "Russia against India." I got married in a brief interval, the time between renewing acquaintance with the lady and our wedding being exactly six months! We then went to Spain and Morocco, and in the autumn of the same year (1900) departed for an extended journey in the Pacific, in which we visited the Dutch East Indies, Borneo, the Philippines (still in a state of war), the China coast, Japan and Korea, and returned by the Siberian railway. The year 1902 saw the publication of "The Mastery of the Pacific" and an illustrated book from my wife's pen called "Two on their Travels." The autumn of that year was spent in the West Indies and Central America, and we then went through the States and revisited Canada, the result being "Greater America,"



which appeared in 1904. Next autumn and winter we spent in South Africa, visiting the German West Coast on the way, travelling in every colony and revisiting Rhodesia and the Victoria Falls, and finally returning home in early summer by the East Coast. The next spring saw the publication of "The Africanderland," and that year (1906) we devoted to a study of European politics and to travel in Austria-Hungary and the Near East, which resulted in "The Whirlpool of Europe," published in 1907. Throughout this period I contributed frequently to the *Morning Post* and on occasion acted as special correspondent to that journal, wrote articles for the *Quarterly*, *Fortnightly*, *North American Review*, and other periodicals, and read papers before the Royal Colonial Institute, Society of Arts, Royal United Service Institute, and other Associations in London and the provinces. If this catalogue of work done in the last eight years appears a heavy one, it must be remembered that it is the output of two people working in collaboration, and working very hard—otherwise it could never have been accomplished. I have used the past tense in speaking of my work, but, as a matter of fact, my literary activity continues unabated, and makes it difficult for us to devote as much time to travelling as heretofore. Nevertheless we have plans for future journeys as fascinating as those already accomplished.

This brief outline leaves out of account smaller journeys taken for pleasure only, but the reader can imagine that the years have been full ones, and that with the widening horizon life becomes more and more interesting. Heartily can I endorse the "Sentimental Traveller" when he says, in the words chosen for the motto of this book :

"I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and cry 'tis all barren'; and so it is, and so is all the world, to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers."



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